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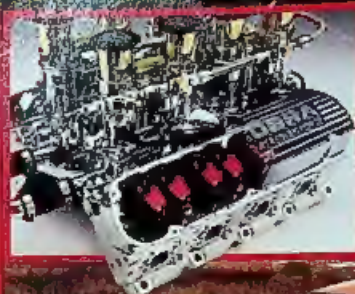


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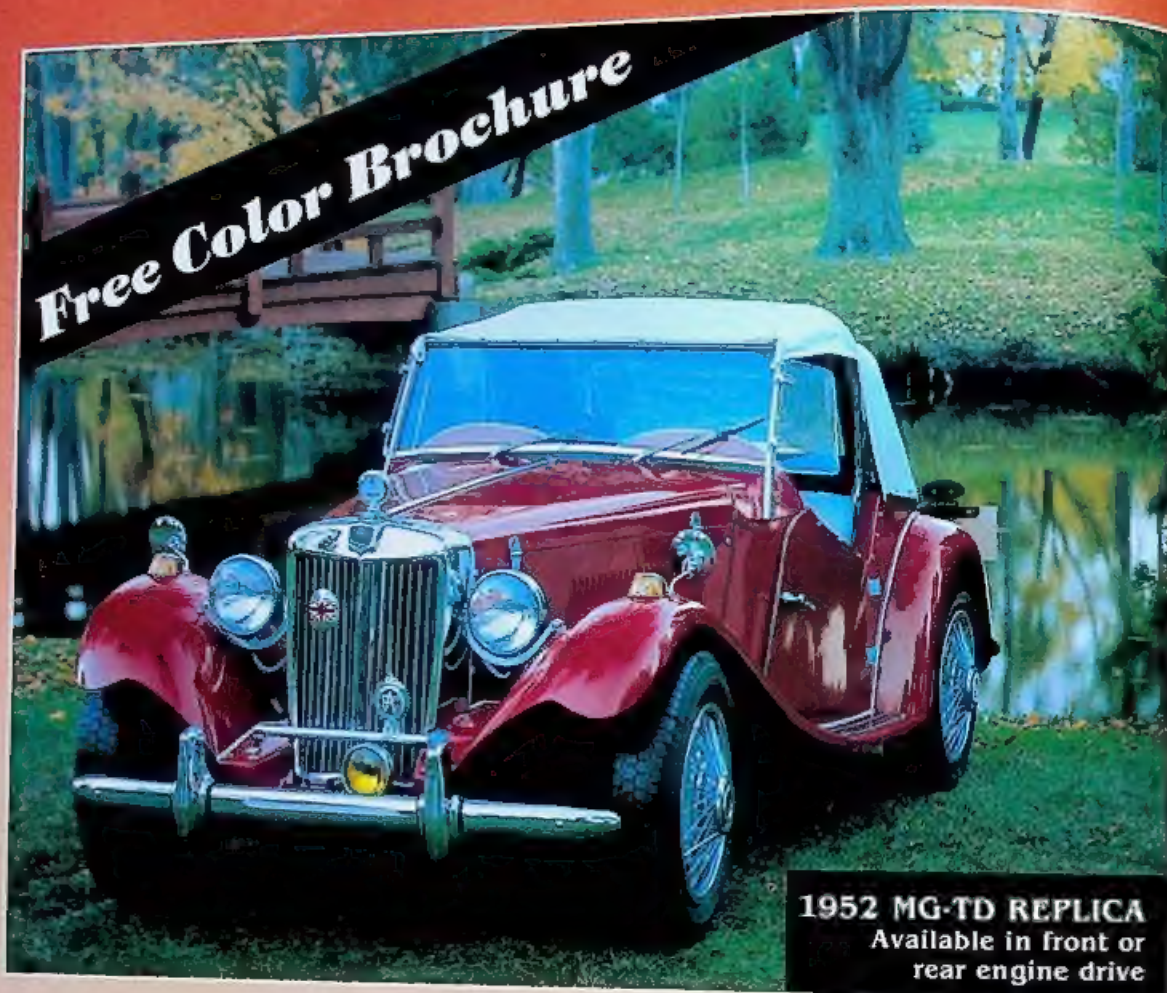
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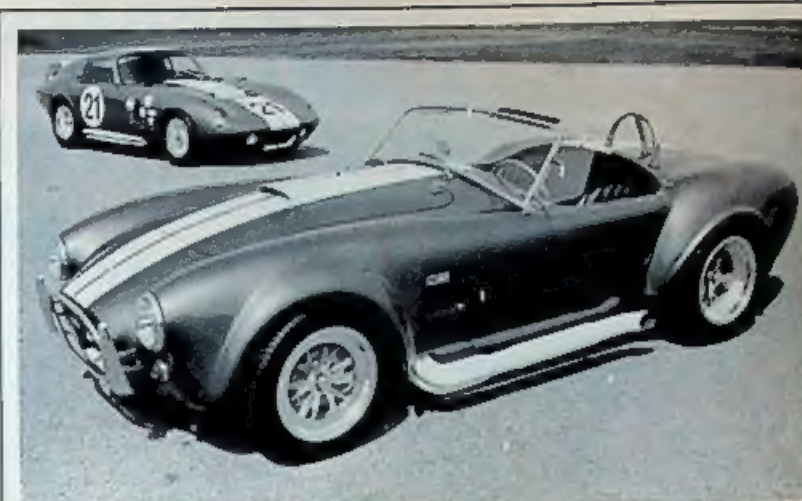
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COVER: With prices of authentic exotics escalating out of sight, building a replica now makes more sense than ever. If you're inclined toward nostalgia, try a Mercedes 300SLR (bottom photo: Jim Youngs). A Countach-style body kit has a more contemporary look (middle photo: Steve Temple), while the Patriot Fiero (top photo: David Fetherston) offers a glimpse of the future. And see our Drivetrain Special in this issue for all the parts and pieces you need to assemble your exotic. (Inglese photo: Steve Coonan)

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6 KIT CAR

UP FRONT

GOOD NEWS FROM THE DMV—FOR A CHANGE

If you haven't experienced it, you probably know of another kit enthusiast who has—let's call it Registration Trauma. After sweating all the details on the build-up of your kit, you figure that the worst is behind you. Wrong. All too often, getting your specialty vehicle licensed at the Department of Motor Vehicles is tougher than rebuilding a seized block. You stand in line for hours waiting to talk to some sleepy-eyed counter-clerk who just gives you a blank look as soon as you mention the word "kit." So you try "handcrafted" or "custom-built." Still no response. He or she then hands you some more forms to fill out, or worse yet, says you have to stand in line to talk to yet another sleepwalker. By this time you're ready to drive your vehicle right up the steps and through the front door to get some action.

Well, the good news is that not all DMV personnel are so difficult. In fact, they seem to be trying in earnest to make things easier for specialty car enthusiasts by developing standardized identification, registration, and titling of kit cars. This is important because, "Right now, the phrase 'kit car' leaves a bad taste in the mouths of DMV regulators," says Anna Phillips of SEMA (the Specialty Equipment Market Association). "They don't know what they are and therefore they must be unsafe."

Soon, however, there may be a clear statement on the books that provides a reference standard for motor-vehicle departments. At a recent meeting held in San Antonio, Texas, by the AAMVA (American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators), the following definition was given initial approval:

"A kit car is a vehicle assembled from a manufactured kit, either as a complete kit to construct a new vehicle, which consists of a prefabricated body and chassis, or a kit composed of a prefabricated body to be mounted to an existing vehicle chassis and drivetrain, commonly referred to as a donor vehicle."

Not exactly news to us, is it? Actually, we prefer the term specialty car, but musclecar enthusiasts want to use it as

well. The terminology has yet to be finalized.

Anyway, the proposal for this new titling and registration procedure states that the year of the vehicle would be the year reflected on the MCO (Manufacturer's Certificate of Origin), and the make designated on the title as KITV. In addition, the VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) of a new kit vehicle would be taken from the MCO belonging to that vehicle. The VIN of a body kit would be a state-assigned number, or as reflected on the MCO.

The bottom line of all this bureaucratic babble is that the only paperwork required to title a complete kit would be an MCO (or acceptable ownership document). A body kit would also require the bills of sale or invoices for all major components used in the construction (in addition to the title of the donor).

For those concerned about not being able to designate their replica as an older vehicle, note that registering a kit as a new vehicle would not (as of this writing) affect the EPA's emissions exemption for kit cars. For example, a Cobra replica with an older-style 302 block should still only have to pass smog standards for pre-1966. However, the AAMVA has recommended that a committee be formed to evaluate emissions requirements for kit cars (proceedings probably won't start until this fall, and I'll keep you posted on them).

If this model language for registering kit cars is ratified at the AAMVA's regional and international meetings (the latter to be held in Detroit in September 1992), then state legislatures may amend current laws. This is the impor-



tant part, because such a revision may not happen unless a large group of specialty vehicle enthusiasts, i.e. regional kit car clubs, petition a state legislator to sponsor such a measure. (Even though we live in a democracy, the truth is that it takes special-interest groups, not individuals, to get laws changed.)

If your state's laws on kit car registration are a problem, the AAMVA's new policy, once approved, may help. For further information on regional meetings and the status of this proposal, kit car club presidents or other responsible parties should contact Larry Greenberg at the AAMVA (4200 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 1100, Arlington, VA 22203, 703/522-4200).

If there's an AAMVA regional meeting scheduled in your area (probably in early June), it wouldn't hurt to show up with a few kit cars so the motor vehicle administrators understand what they're all about. Just be friendly and offer to take them for a gentle spin around the block. (Cobra owners, don't forget I said gentle.) Treat them as you'd like to be treated at the DMV, and we may see some improvements in the registration process.

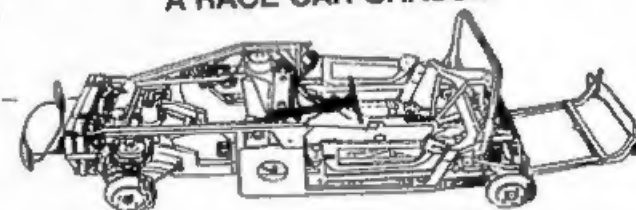
In other news, I recently met with George Evans, president of the Specialty Constructed Vehicle Association, regarding a problem we've been hearing more and more of lately—kits delivered incomplete from manufacturers. The SCVA has received a batch of letters complaining about how hard it is to obtain back-ordered parts to finish a project car. If you've been having the same problem, we want to hear about it. We'd like to know of positive experiences as well. The SCVA has a standard report-card form you can fill out, or you can simply send a typed letter describing your situation. (Please, no phone calls.) Once we get a handle on the size of the problem, we'll know better how to proceed. You can contact the SCVA at 2111 Poinsettia, Dept. KC07, Long Beach, CA 90805.

Steve Temple

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JULY 1992 7

WIN THIS KIT AT INDY!

A chance to win a Porsche 911 rebody kit from Dion Sportscars is only one of many reasons to attend the World Kit Car Show at the Indianapolis Raceway Park, July 25-26. In addition to promising to be the largest specialty vehicle event of the year, there will be plenty of trophies, games, parties, and, best of all, every imaginable type of kit car on display. As for the Dion Speedster kit (retail value of \$7000), all you have to do is fill out an entry form (available from the show program and at various booths) and deposit it in the box at the show. The drawing will take place on Sunday,



the World Kit Car Show include a 500-car parade lap at the famous Indianapolis 500 Speedway (held on trade-only day, Thursday, July 24) and gift bags for all exhibitors (both amateur and professional). Other events are scheduled as well, to be held prior to the public show days, so for more information, con-

July 26, and the winner will be announced at that time.

Sponsored by the Specialty Constructed Vehicle Association, plans for

tact the SCVA at 310/422-9167. Headquarters hotel for the event is the Waterfront Inn (317/299-8400), and show rates are available upon request.

FORD'S "COBRA"

At a recent editors' Roundtable meeting here at Petersen Publishing Company, we met with Allan Gilmour, the president of the Ford Automotive Group. Among other subjects, we discussed whether the company is developing an antidote to the Viper strike from Chrysler. He claimed that nothing is in the works (nuts), but did reminisce about his authentic Shelby 427 S/C. He griped about splinters from the wooden steering wheel and the roadster's difficult handling (no surprise there), but also crowed a bit about



blowing off Corvettes at stoplights. And he admitted to selling it for an absurdly low price (we win every time we hear of this oft-repeated experience). Anyway, the only Cobra coming from Ford will be a variant of the venerable Mustang GT. Available in limited numbers, it will fea-

ture a specially engineered suspension for improved handling, four-wheel disc brakes, and a higher-output version of the 5.0-liter V8 with new manifolds, larger-volume injectors, and a recalibrated computer. Deliveries should begin in early 1993.

ELVIS SPOTTED WITH RHINO!

When we suggested that you turn your Z-car into an animal with the Rhino body kit from Blue Ray ("Rhino GT," January '92), we didn't think Elvis (the name of this two-year-old white rhino) would take us seriously! Maybe he's crooning "Love Me Tender."



PHOTO: JOSEPH LINBECK

8 KIT CAR

Classic Roadsters, Ltd., Unveils 1955 Thunderbird* Replica

FARGO, ND — Classic Roadsters, Ltd., does it again. Hot on the heels of their most recent hit — the Classic 427 Cobra* replica — Classic Roadsters, Ltd., proudly introduces yet another model to their wide selection of sports car reproductions.

Classic Roadsters, Ltd. has acquired the manufacturing and marketing rights to the Regal Thunderbird* replica. After minor modifications and mechanical updates by the Classic Roadster engineering department, the new '55 Thunderbird* reproduction is now ready for sale.

When asked about the latest addition, Classic Roadster Vice President Scott Dennison said, "We feel our '55 Thunderbird* reproduction will help round-out our full line of roadsters. The Classic 427 has quickly become the fastest selling Cobra* reproduction in the world, and the Sebring, Duke and 500K models continue to make

a strong showing in the industry. With the '55 Thunderbird*, Classic Roadsters has the opportunity to satisfy every customer's needs...from the luxury enthusiast to the performance driver."

Dennison, former president of the Excalibur Motor Corporation, is currently Classic Roadster's director of production and engineering. He is uniquely qualified to launch the introduction of Classic's new Thunderbird* reproduction.

Classic Roadster president Jeff Davis added, that while the Regal Thunderbird* is a solid, well respected kit, Classic Roadsters has taken progressive measures to "make it the most complete, highest quality Thunderbird* component automobile on the market." The Classic '55 Thunderbird* reproduction is now available as a component kit or custom-built.

The new Thunderbird* on the block will

be designed for front engine V8 power. Suspension requirements are stock Ford. Additional accessories include removable hard-top, power windows and air conditioning, which help make the '55 Classic Thunderbird* reproduction one of the most sought after kits in the industry.

The initial production run will be limited. Individuals hoping for immediate delivery should place their order for the new '55 Classic Thunderbird* today, and are urged to call Classic Roadsters at their soonest convenience. Factory representatives will be on hand to answer any further questions.

Call Today for Introductory Brochure:
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SEEN/HEARD

ATTACK AUBURN?

We've been unable to confirm the rumor that Elegant Motors is in the final development stages of the Attack Auburn model shown in this spy photo. We're told the tail-gunner AA, shown here after moderate crash testing, is hoped to follow the success of the company's Attack Cobra model. At press time, company president Del Amy was unavailable for comment, but we have learned from our carefully placed spies that interest for this vehicle is running quite high, with several inquiries already received (but alas, no deposits thus far).

Idi Amin, said to be staging a comeback, stated: "My father had an original in 1936, and I loved that car so much. It's just the kind of thing my coup attempt needs to give my insurgents some hope. But the originals just cost too much today." Ford exec Harold Poling would not confirm rumors about a



joint-venture interest in the Attack Auburn to carry the Blue Oval torch as a Viper and ZR-1 killer, at least until the new-generation Mustang Cobra is road worthy. Curiously, there has been little interest from U.S. military sources. Hearsay reports indicate that the neo-classic styling doesn't quite fit with the forces' latest hero, the Hummer. We'll

keep you informed.—Jim Youngs

Editor's Note: Any readers who have their own yarns—er, we mean facts, about the Attack Auburn are encouraged to submit them to Kit Car. Writers of the best entries may receive a Kevlar flak jacket engraved with a Kit Car insignia.



THE NAKED ELECTRIC 2½

Solar Electric recently held a one-day seminar in Los Angeles on alternative fuel automobiles. The event featured special guests David Zucker (director of the Naked Gun films) and movie star Leslie Nielson (of both The Naked Gun and its sequel, among other hits). Zucker, longtime electric vehicle owner and champion of the alternative-fuel cause, gave a heartfelt plea to all present to be as energy conscious as possible. He also showed attendees a peek at some film footage involving a solar car chase that was cut from The Naked Gun 2½. Leslie Nielson (pictured) showed off his first electric automobile, delivered to him that day.



CAMARO-BASED KIT

Knight Industries has begun production of a GTO kit that uses the '82 through '91 Pontiac Firebird (or Camaro). The firm chose these donor vehicles for their performance and cost-effective ease of modification. Options include an anti-collision warning device, digital display, rearview-mirror video display, and anti-lock brakes. The prototype will debut this summer, and turn-key models and kits should soon follow. Prices range from \$4995 (kit) to \$17,995 (turn-key), as of this writing. For more information, call Knight Industries, P.O. Box 164, Dept. KC07, Covington, LA 70434, 601/392-8648.

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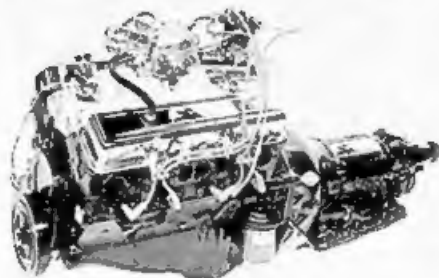


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12 KIT CAR

SEEN/HEARD



CONTEMPORARY CORVETTE

Legendary Motorworks (a new kit car company, not to be confused with Legendary Motors) has just introduced '57 C, a replica of the '57 Corvette. It has been adapted to fit a mid-size GM frame to provide a new-car ride, with coil-over suspension, disc brakes, and so on. The firm claims that the kit includes an interior package, chrome, and all incidentals necessary for completion, and is produced with the novice builder in mind. Pricing is around \$17,900 for the kit, and \$36,900 for a turn-key car. Contact: Legendary Motorworks, 4 Arch St., Dept. KC07, Canonsburg, PA 15317, 800/858-0436.



ALUMINUM NEWS

Looking for an aluminum-body Cobra replica? Dion Sportscars has just released some preliminary details on just such a project. The 16-gauge aluminum is hand-rolled over bucks made from an original 427. All chassis and suspension components are from Contemporary Classic. Turn-key models will be powered by 428ci Ford engines (427 side-oliers are optional) and priced around \$75,000. A rolling body/chassis component kit is also available for \$35,000 (as of this writing). For further details, contact: Dion Sportscars, 28 Loma Ave., Dept. KC07, Long Beach, CA 90803, 310/438-1085.



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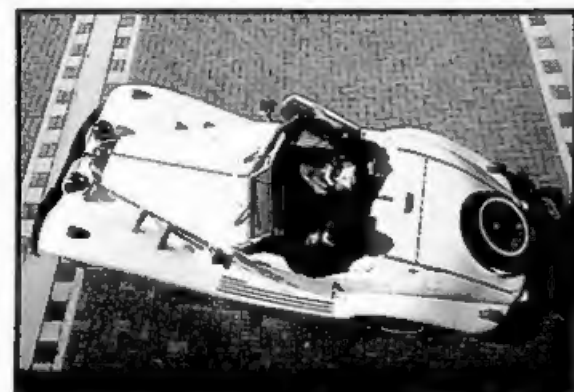
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SEEN/HEARD

LATEST KIT CAR LISTINGS

For the very latest in kit car information, Curt Scott's *The Complete Guide to Specialty Cars* now includes an Allstar Update. The supplement is crammed with photos and fresh info (hot off the presses!) on the ever-changing world of kit cars. *The Complete Guide* is a must-have reference book for anyone interested in kit cars. Contact: Crown Publishing, P.O. Box 4397, Dept. KC07, Glendale, CA 91222, 818/244-5007.



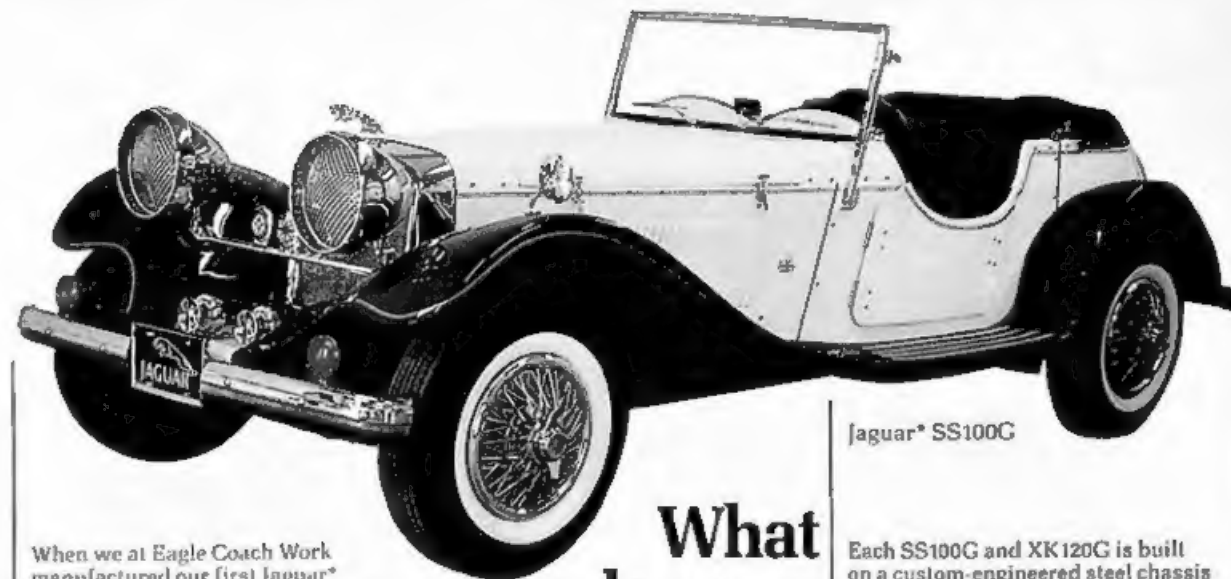
ON ITS OWN

The Ohio Valley Kit Car Club will be the sole sponsor of this year's Cincinnati Kit Car Show, August 22-23, 1992. As with last year's event, the showgrounds are at Oeder's Lake in Morrow, Ohio, and there will be trophy presentations for both amateur and professional entrants. For more information, contact Alan Solinger at 513/293-0834.



TAKE A FERRET HOME

The folks who built the prototype Ferret ("Ferret," March '92) tell us they now have all the molds and jigs ready for production, and their second car is nearing completion. Herb Adams has supplied his expertise to stiffen the rear suspension with stainless-steel lower control-arm bushings. Base price of the kit is less than \$13,000. For more information, contact: The Ferret Corporation, 257 E. 32nd St., Dept. KC07, Holland, MI 49423, 616/392-4909. **KC**



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MAILBOX

PICKY PICKY

Your guy on the cover of the March '92 issue needs a tech tip: don't stick a 1/2-inch impact wrench in the fender!

James M. Snyder
Milpitas, CA

Okay, so we took a little artistic license. Did you also think the X-ray Cobra body on the cover of our November '91 issue was actually transparent? Besides, the buildup procedure was thoroughly documented in the feature "Step by Step."

ITALIAN STALLION

First, I'd like to say "Bravo" for the changes you've made in the past year. I think your "How-to-Handbook" section is great.

I was reading "Kits in Kissimmee" (March '92), and I saw a rear shot of Italian Image's Fiero-Stallion conversion. However, I couldn't find an address for Italian Image in that issue. Could you print it?

Mike Haring
Maryland Heights, MO

The address and phone is: Italian Image, Dept. KC07, 3958 Northlake Blvd., Ste. 338, Lake Park, FL 33403, 407/746-2076. Also, check out our May '92 issue for a feature on the car.

MORE ON SPECIALTY CAR TAXES

Your editorial about AB 758 inspired this letter and the associated research that I sent to my state assemblymember. Perhaps you might wish to give other readers and companies some ammo for their own letters to their assemblymembers. No matter in which state you reside, you can send this letter to your local representative:

I read an editorial in Kit Car magazine (Up Front, January '92) that pointed out some of the latest legislation to come out of Sacramento. Namely, Assembly Bill 758.

I would like to personally challenge the right of the state legislature to convert vehicle licensing fees to a property tax, as this bill seems to do. The bill also states that any modification to a vehicle costing in excess of \$200 shall result in the reclassification of the vehicle and a reassessment of its monetary and taxable value.

If a vehicle owner decides to replace

a worn-out engine with a rebuilt motor that provides more horsepower and greater efficiency (a benefit to the environment), why should his or her vehicle be reclassified or reassessed? It is apparent that the legislature of this state has circumvented the will of the people as expressed in Proposition 103 by using this ploy to raise taxes through what I believe to be an illegal act of conversion. By so doing it has forced the public into raising the tax value and thus the insured value of a vehicle.

It is well known in the automotive industry and throughout the world that the State of California is a hotbed of creativity and innovative thinking in the design of new vehicle concepts. There is more vehicle customizing and restoration in this state per capita than just about anywhere else. If you wanted to harm the small businessperson through loss of sales in aftermarket parts and components, you've chosen the right legislation to do it.

Then, of course, there's the old question of whether a state legislature can lay taxes without the people's vote or consent. (You don't have mine!) Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution prohibits indirect taxation, and this is it.

The state assembly seems to have forgotten the meaning of "Government of the people, by the people, for the people" and the words "no taxation without representation." AB 758 does not represent the will of the people, it only represents a feeble attempt by the state assembly to offset California's huge deficit caused by the loss of over 70,000 defense jobs and the tax revenue from those jobs. The loss of thousands of more jobs in the automotive industry caused by this bill will only make matters worse. Rescind this bill.

Mark McCandlish
Rialto, CA

THE WIZ

I'm trying to locate the manufacturer or distributor of a VW Bug roadster kit called The Wizard. It is similar to a kit from Customotive in Canada called the



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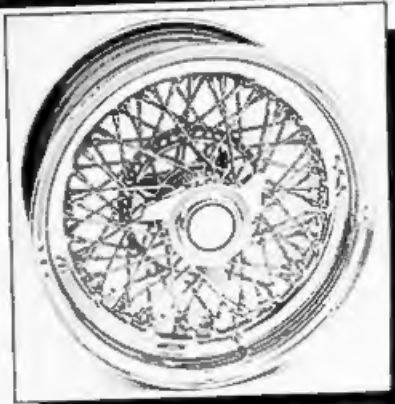
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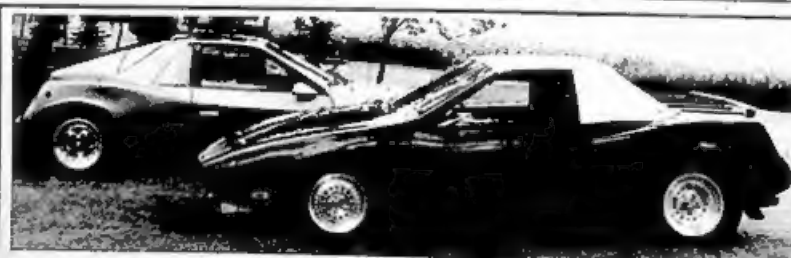
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MAILBOX

Eurosport. Do you know of an American version and who I should contact?

Brian Misfud
San Francisco, CA

Domino Cars handles The Wizard in the United States. Its staff can be reached at: 102 New Haven Ave., Dept. KC07, Milford, CT 06460, 203/878 7352.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

We were lucky enough to have purchased a '58 LaDawri for the unbelievable price of only \$35! We really want to build this car, but we need some help from your readers. We are in desperate need of any information regarding this original '58 kit car. If you could tell us where we can get the instruction booklet, we would really appreciate it.

Donald and Shelly Hermanowski
1917 South 82nd St.
Mesa, AZ 85208

'VETTE-ERAN

I would like to make a comment or two regarding your March '92 issue. On page 29, in the article on the Zender Fact 4 Spyder, you stated that "0 to 60 can be reached in 5.8 seconds, and the top speed is claimed to be 154 mph. All in all, it is comparable to an LT1 Corvette optioned with a Callaway twin-turbo package." I would like to correct that statement in two ways.

First, this performance could be reached by any LT1 Corvette. The latest figures show a 5.61 second 0-to-60 time and a 13.958 quarter mile for this car when equipped with an automatic.

Second, there is no twin-turbo package available with the LT1 engine. Callaway expects to release its non-turbo ZR-1 based CR-1 soon, but any LT1 modifications are a while away.

Many of the gang at Ferret Corp./Pro Body have been good friends of mine for many years, and I have found it interesting to watch the development of the Ferret. Thanks for the articles.

Patrick Hulst
Dearborn, MI

See the update on the Ferret in this month's Seen/Heard section. **KC**

Letters in Kit Car reflect the opinions of the writers and do not imply the endorsement of this magazine. All letters should be addressed to Kit Car magazine, 8490 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069. Letters should include the writer's name, address, and telephone number. We reserve the right to edit and/or condense letters for clarity, brevity, or other editorial purposes. Due to the volume of mail received, we cannot answer letters personally.



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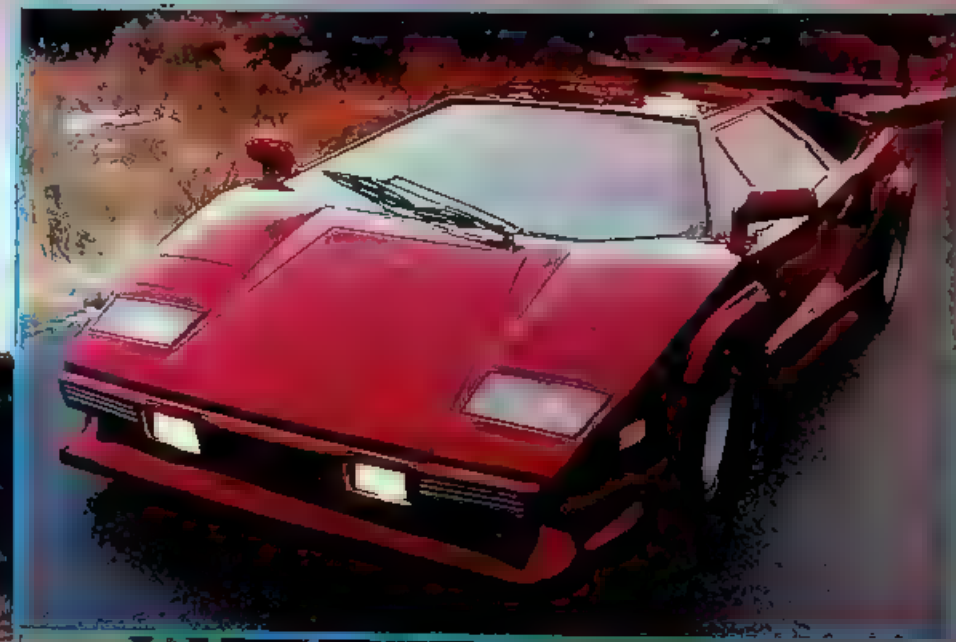
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By Steve Temple



don't want to take chances—think of your life.

That experience still haunts him, and also directed his approach to building—or rather over-building—his flaming-red supercar. The bullish inspiration for the body shape is obvious, but that's where any similarity ends. To start with, he beefed up the custom spaceframe with extra tubing so that the top can be removed. Good thing, because frankly, this type of specialty car can otherwise feel pretty cramped at times.

Ben also took extra care to weld the steel plates to the sides of the 1½-inch chassis tubing, which interlocks both horizontally and vertically in continuous load paths for a highly rigid structure. Corvette pieces suspend the chassis at both ends but with some significant modifications. Locating the rear end are eight—count 'em eight—separate links. On each side you'll find three aluminum-alloy camber rods, two trailing arms, two fore-and-aft links for the hub carrier, and lastly, a swaybar end. And don't forget the four (two per side) adjustable coil-overs. You'd have to hit a land mine to derail this rear end.

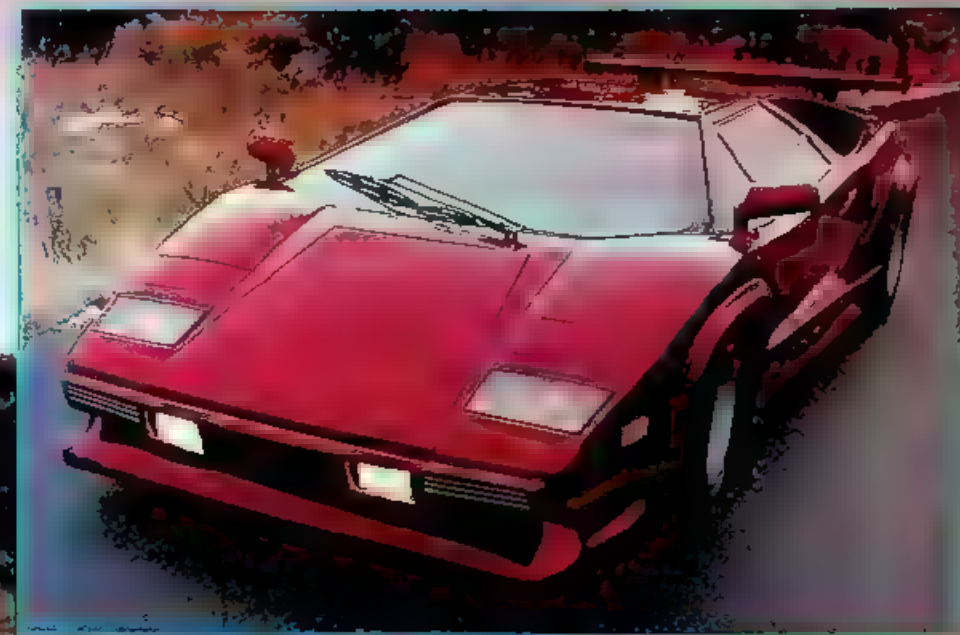
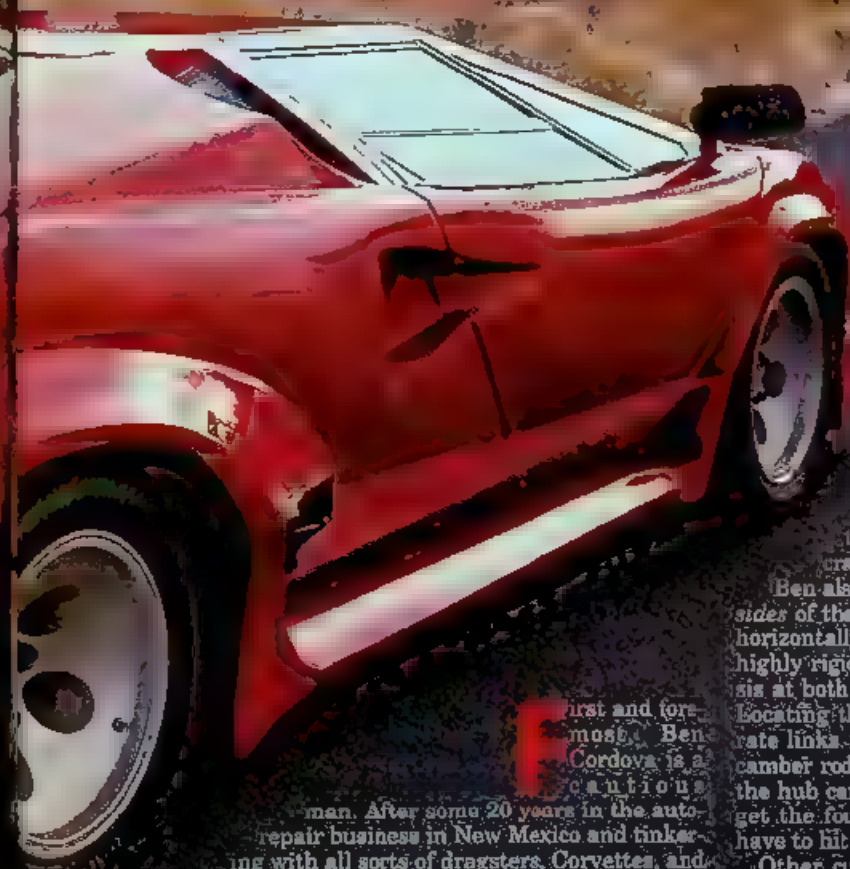
Other custom features include a combination of GM and Ford telescoping half-shafts bolted up to the ZF five-speed transaxle. A 454 GM block (bored out .030 inch to 468 cid), ported and polished and topped by a 760-cfm Holley, supplies more steam than even Casey Jones could use—460 hp to be exact. Rubber in the rear is a fat pole-

First and foremost, Ben Cordova is a cautious man. After some 20 years in the auto-repair business in New Mexico and tinkering with all sorts of dragsters, Corvettes, and other rolling exotics, he's seen how a haphazard job can hurt you. A perfect example is the friend of his who built a car and decided to go out and hammer it. "He broke the frame and slipped the thing, got injured like hell," Ben related, shaking his head. "You

SANTA FE SUPERCHARGER

ALL ABOARD FOR THE RIDE
OF YOUR LIFE

By Steven R. ...



don't want to take a chance—about your life.

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of three 24535VR16s and the front wheels carry 25 x 45VR16s.

Although Ben purchased the basic fiberglass body kit from a source that prefers to remain anonymous, the company has advertised in *KIT Car* for many years. However, he decided to go one better and add some ground effects plates and a custom fabricated rear bumper that required several separate molds. That job was a real bear," he admits.

Out of the dozen or so cars built using this body package, most have required far less effort and expense than Ben's project. With some frame modification, a Fiero frame or even a VW pan can accommodate the body panels, though obviously with some compromise in performance compared with a custom spaceframe. He estimates the time for the entire project was about two and a half years, with Ben doing about 60 percent of the work, and shopworkers and his friend John Nelson, a mechanical engineer, doing the rest.

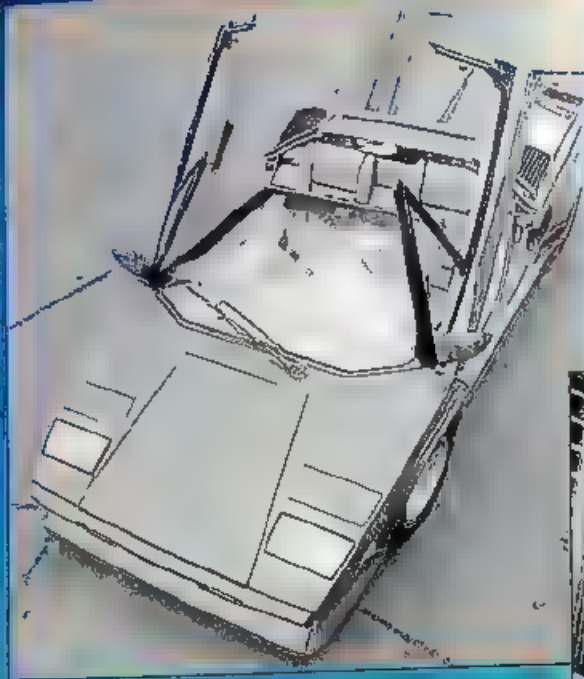
Was all the effort worth it? Yes, but in a qualified way, because Ben still isn't quite done. He's already spent a bundle on the car (well on the way to six figures), but as with many project cars, there's always more to do, always something that could be reworked. For instance, he decided to increase the cooling-water capacity due to some problems with heat dissipation, then there were those annoying gaps around the windshield pillars, and next he felt some of the engine compartment wiring could be tidied up, and...well, you get the idea.

Cosmetic niggles aside, the car handles beautifully, no doubt due to the super-substantial setup of the

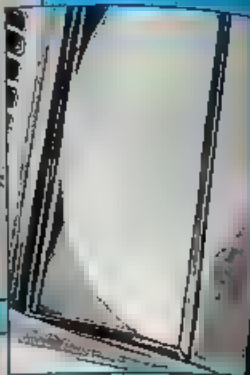


Note the interlocking tubes of the spaceframe. Steel plates have been carefully welded to the sides of the tubing for greater strength.

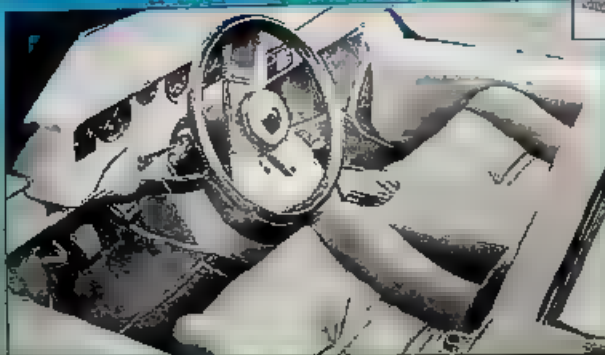
22 KIT CAR



Leather covers for the Alpine speakers received that extra treatment.



Custom-fitted kid leather graces the interior.



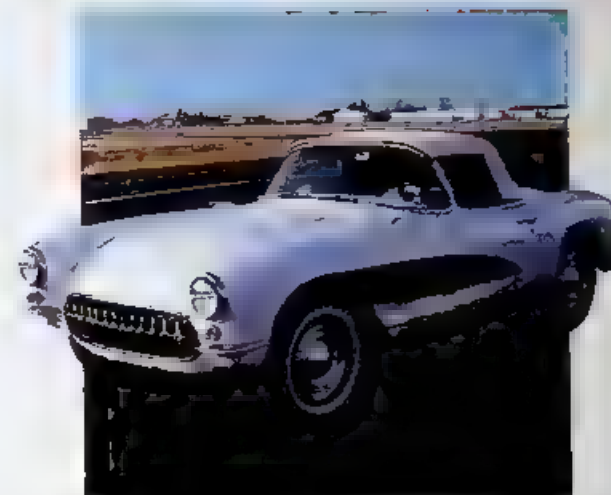
rear end and robust chassis design. I expected the turn-in on winding roads to be almost too sudden, but instead the car ran as if on steel rails, even at twice the speed advised by the caution signs. Apply all kinds of power on all sorts of maneuvers and this express train keeps its poise and balance, without the squirrely handling sometimes found in mid-engine configurations. The 2.8L five

speed and Hays clutch have a smooth, even take-up—there's no slam-and-lurch action, just a steadily building fountain of torque. Well, almost—Fourth gear was a bit balky. But Ben will no doubt sort that one out, along with the million-and-one other things he plans to do. Whatever else he adds, you can bet he won't skimp. After all, this Superchief ain't for just haulin' freight. **KC**



Just how stout can you get? This rear end was located with eight links in all.

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Consulier's CONUNDRUM

By Steve Temple

Warren Mosler is developing a persecution complex, and for good reason. Since founding Consulier Automotive in 1988, he's become the Rodney Dangerfield of the automobile industry. Almost everybody has taken pot shots at his car's unorthodox styling, and he can't get no respect for its advanced technology and construction.

Thus shabby treatment simply isn't justified. In the first place, the car's lines have been improved with some rounding here and there, so the overall



PHOTOGRAPHY STEVE TEMPLE

look is more rounded. True, the appearance of the car, shall we say, doesn't scream "race car for the street," but the looks grow on you, especially as you become familiar with the car's underlying personality. It is precisely this depth of character, this engineering excellence, that ultimately wins you over.

Even though the Consulier is not available in kit form, the specialty vehicle industry can learn much from its design and construction. This turn-key component car points the way for other manufacturers in showing just how much can be done with composite technology. In the past, kit cars earned a reputation for having flimsy fiberglass bodies mounted on only slightly more rigid chassis designs. Improvements have been made over the years, particularly by manufacturers of Cobra replicas, but the Consulier represents a quantum leap in construction. Its incredibly light, 275-pound, unitized frame-and-body is composed entirely of fiberglass.

Describing the car's innovative monocoque design, Consulier's Roy Chapin points out with disarming simplicity, "There's no metal between the front and rear wheels." Consulier achieves this engineering feat by using the best composite technology available (see sidebar). Aerospace and marine engineers have employed advanced composites for years, but automotive applications are rare except in racing cars and concept vehicles such as the Zender Fact 4 ("Zender Fact 4 Spider," March '92). Even the much touted Corvette's composite body is merely a polyester shell of chopped 'glass attached to a tubular chassis. Ditto for the Viper, whose clamshell front hood wobbles all over the place upon opening.

Contrast that with the Consulier's bulletproof Kevlar and carbon-fiber construction. Wack the body with a rubber mallet and it simply shrugs off the blows. And after several collisions on the race track with steel-body cars time and again the Consulier has emerged virtually unscathed. In another incident, a BMW and a Consulier running side-by-side on a remote mountain road plowed into herd of

deer. The Beemer lost most of its front end, while the Consulier suffered only a small crack and a broken headlight. Moreover, the Consulier has passed the DOT's crash tests with flying colors. So much for the supposed drawbacks of a "plastic car."

Beyond its merits of structural integrity, the Consulier's construction offers numerous benefits for the performance enthusiast. Outfitted with merely a 2.2-liter Chrysler four-banger (albeit turbocharged to 200 hp), this featherweight street-fighter punches from 0 to 60 mph in less than five seconds, and knocks out the quarter-mile in 13.5 seconds. And believe it or not, it still gets 34 mpg on the highway.

Even faster times are undoubtedly possible with the new 16-valve 224hp Turbo III. The Consulier armed with this new ammo is fittingly called the C-4 (after the plastic explosive). Both engines come from the skunkworks of none other than Carroll Shelby himself. The Turbo 2.2 engine is the same one that radically transformed the Dodge Omni GLH and GLHS (Shelby once quipped that the initials stood for "Goes Like Hell" and "Goes Like Hell Somewhere").

As I discovered firsthand at Consulier's facility near West Palm Beach, Florida, these phrases are even more apt when the engines are mid-mounted in a car with a total weight of less than 2000 pounds. There's none of that annoying turbo-lag you'd expect in a conventional car, and when the blow-dryer does kick in, it feels like you're headed for

warp speed. The ringing of the turbo signals the imminent kick in the pants, and when it hits—hang on. Even in light traffic on the freeway, you have to ease off the throttle sooner than you'd expect to keep from riding up the bumpers of cars ahead. Upon lifting the gas pedal, the wastegate emits this weird ratcheting, sucking sound like some reptile from *Alien*. You've just struck with the speed of a rattlesnake, and there's no recovering from this bite. Indeed, Consulier is so confident of the superiority of its design, the firm has a standing offer of \$100,000 to anyone who can beat its times on a road course with a production-built sports car. Nobody's collected yet—though controversy has clouded some of the competitions held.



The revamped interior of the LX model is now in keeping with the Consulier's exotic image.

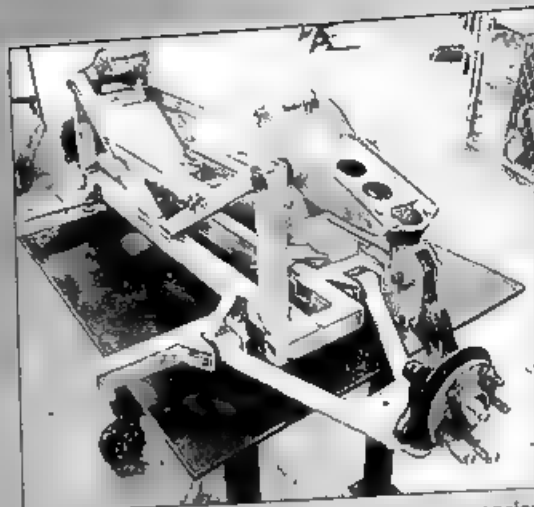


Warren Mosler has thrown up his arms to trying to understand the reactions to his Consulier.

One obvious question about a car with such a skewed power-to-weight ratio is how well it handles bumps. Very well, thank you. At higher speeds, the body's reverse-lift aerodynamics help keep the rubber on the pavement. In addition, the front steel subframe (aluminum is optional) supports a McKee independent system with upper rocker arms that cantilever on coil-overs to absorb washboard surfaces. At the rear is a similar design, with the subframe cradling the engine as well. This same system will be used on Consul's HP-40 sedan now under development. While driving the test mule, I watched the rocker arms in action, and they respond adroitly to the slightest road imperfections.

On the GTP sports car, the suspension operates with extraordinary suppleness, with virtually no jiggling or darting. The steering response is quick, positive, and direct. You feel almost invincible diving into a turn, and can apply huge doses of power coming out of the apex without throwing the back end off its track. The car just slings around like it was hooked to a steel cable. Consul's reports pulling as much as 98 g on the skidpad.

Interestingly, the brakes are stock discs right off Chrysler's parts shelves, as is the five-speed tranny. Why the conventional production components? Chapin explains, "Our market is for the guy who either



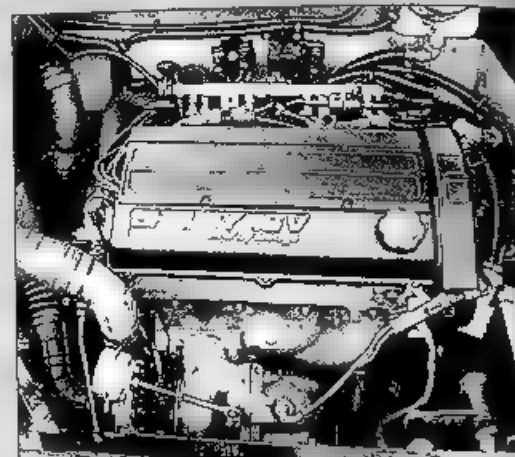
The front subframe carries a rocker-arm suspension system damped by inboard coil-over springs.

understands the technology of the structure, or who wants high performance at low price—not necessarily low price going into it, but low cost of continuing to receive that performance. Because of the fact of having a very light automobile, we don't put a lot of stress on the mechanical components. We've run three 24-hour races, untold number of regional races, a full IMSA series, and we've never had a structural defect in the automobile." In other words, thanks to the chassis' superior technology you don't need expensive, heavy-duty race components. And replacing most worn parts is as simple as stopping by the nearest Mopar dealer.

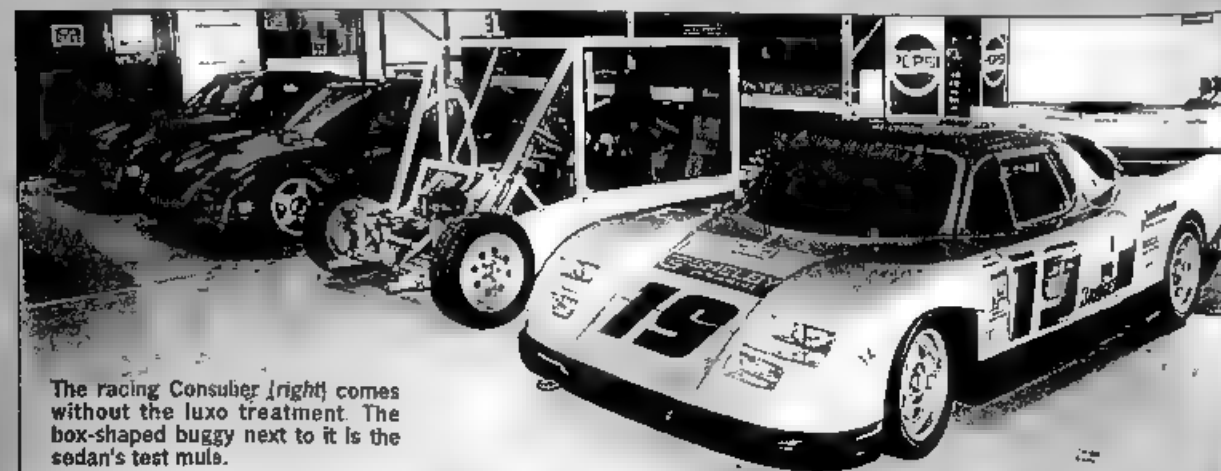
One part that should be swapped right off, though, is the Pontiac

Fiero parker. It works well, though it doesn't look like a \$63,000 exotic. Otherwise, the interior is classy and the original cockpit treatment received quite a drubbing in the automotive press (the editor of our sister publication *Motor Trend* even had the gall to refer to it as looking like a kit car—shows what he knows about kits). But the interior accommodations have since been spruced up. Included in the LX model are air conditioning, electric windows, an Alpine stereo with a CD player, leather seats, full carpeting, and VDO instrumentation. The stripped-down, race-oriented GTP SPORT version costs about \$10,000 less (as of this writing).

Whichever version you prefer, the comfort factor is quite good, much better in fact than replicas of GT40s and Countaches that I've wedged myself into. There's even some luggage space in the rear underneath a vinyl tarp. The Consul's bubble



What makes the new C-4 Consulier go boom is Shelby's new Turbo III—a 16-valve 2.2-liter Chrysler rated at 224 hp.



The racing Consul (right) comes without the luxu treatment. The box-shaped buggy next to it is the sedan's test mule.



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cabin allows good headroom, and the mid-engine layout affords plenty of space in the footboxes. This is an exotic you can enjoy without the pain of sacrifice. Warren Mosler has nothing to be ashamed of here.

So what's next? Not only is a four-passenger sedan in the works. Consulier is also developing a 2300-pound, full-size passenger van constructed of the same type of lightweight composites (it's affec-

tionately called—what else—the Van-Go). Both of these vehicles would be ideal for alternative-fuel powerplants. In fact, one firm has already run a Consulier with battery power and a hydrogen fuel cell. The gasoline-powered Consulier has dramatically demonstrated the value of lightweight composite construction—now all that's left is for the world to realize that Mosler has built a better mousetrap. **KC**

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CONSULIER'S CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY

By Ken Hankinson, N.A.

What is referred to as "high-tech" is not always as advanced as you may think. Just because a specialty car manufacturer throws in some strands of carbon fiber or swatches of Kevlar fabric, the result is not necessarily cutting edge; builders sometimes add these materials as much for marketing hype as for any real benefit. However, this doesn't seem to be the case with Consulier. It not only uses the latest in composite materials and methods throughout, but also designs around them in ways that maximize their benefits—that's truly advanced technology.

While the innovative Consulier body is a true monocoque—a French term for stress-skin construction—this is not a new concept (Jaguar used it in the famous E-types of the '60s). But Consulier engineers it to the extreme. Instead of solid, heavier (and cheaper) fiberglass laminates, the firm uses lightweight foam-core sandwich laminates with thin, high-modulus (super-stiff) skins. In so doing, a conventional frame becomes redundant. Instead, stresses are taken by the body panels themselves; torsional rigidity comes from the panels and various stiffening devices and ribs within the body's structure.

For comparison, similar construction has been used for years in offshore raceboat hulls. Often these hulls can be made so stiff that few—if any—internal members are necessary. Yet skins on either side of the core material might be less than 1/8-inch thick on a 40-footer! While these skins may include any combination of super-strong reinforcements such as S-glass, Kevlar, or carbon fiber, the key to ultimate strength is in the resin that completes the composite. This resin must stick tenaciously to not only the reinforcing fibers, but also to the core materials; if a skin parts company from the core, all is lost. In addition, the resin must also stretch and compress enough so that the reinforcing fibers can

do their job without the resin cracking into pieces.

General-purpose polyester resins—the kind most often used in fiberglass car bodies—are simply too rigid and brittle for these reinforcements in such sandwich laminates. So polyesters are only a bit better. Vinylesters (more advanced types of polyester) have better elonga-



Can you believe the unitized frame-and-body weighs only 275 pounds?

tion and bonding qualities, but still are not the best. What's the ultimate resin for highly stressed sandwich panels? Epoxy. It costs more but sticks like crazy and has qualities that closely match the reinforcements' demands. This is what Consulier uses.

If epoxy is not used, consider what can happen in a laminate using Kevlar. The laminate depends on the matrix formed between the Kevlar and the resin acting in concert under load. Because of its high flexural and tensile strength, Kevlar laminates tend to bend, dent, or otherwise deflect upon impact rather than fracture. However, ordinary polyester resins tend to be brittle and crack or shatter upon impact, and don't bond well to Kevlar in the first place. The resin fails before the Kevlar by cracking and/or parting from the reinforcement. Once this happens, the Kevlar fabric becomes virtually useless and the structure falls apart. A suitable epoxy, however, flexes much more upon impact, staying bonded to the Kevlar under far greater stresses.

Consulier carries things further by varying composite ingredients at given points in the body to make the best use

of specific materials. For example, foam-core density is increased where extra impact resistance is needed. Bidirectional S-glass (fiberglass) is used on the outside for better finished appearance and extra resistance to dents and dings compared to the somewhat weaker E-glass inside. Vacuum bagging (a method of construction where the layup is surrounded by a bag and the air is sucked out) is used to bond skins to cores rather than by hand layup alone, in order to prevent air entrapment that can lead to core-to-skin bond failure. Vacuum bagging also reduces resin content for lighter weight (you need only enough resin to wet out and maintain bonds).

If done correctly, the result is a body that's not only extremely lightweight, but also strong and resistant to torsional forces. A stiffer body means more easily realized handling and performance expectations; body flex won't interfere as much with steering and handling geometry or alignment. Major components in the car (brakes, engine, accessories, and so on) can be lighter and more compact as well. More usable volume is available, along with better fuel economy, faster acceleration, shorter stopping distances, and more precise handling. Also, such a body won't rust, is highly resistant to dents and body damage, and yet is easily repaired.

If there are any down sides to this construction, they include high cost and labor intensity. Also, a car can be too light, especially when high-powered, and become airborne on occasion. That's why, as weight is decreased and power increased, it becomes ever more important to incorporate negative lift (downforce) characteristics in body design so that road holding is not diminished. Consulier is well aware of this fact and has addressed it in both the aerodynamics and suspension components.

Ken Hankinson is a naval architect by profession and an expert on composite technology.



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WEST COAST'S REGAL-SIZE ROADSTER PROVES THAT BIGGER IS BETTER, BUT THAT'S NOT THE ONLY DIFFERENCE



By Steve Temple



ot all Elvis impersonators are alike. Some appear to be a Xerox copy of the King, while others look more like a weird mutation. Then there are those rarefied types who shun the term "impersonator" and prefer to think of themselves as "Elvis Evokers." They seek to evoke the spirit of Presley (whatever that is—heck even the U.S. Post Office can't figure out which picture of him to put on a stamp).

Anyway, when it comes to Cobra replicas, West Coast's is like one of those evokers. It doesn't replicate the Cobra so much as draw inspiration from it. And that's good, because the original Shelby 427 S/C was hot, cramped, and ill-



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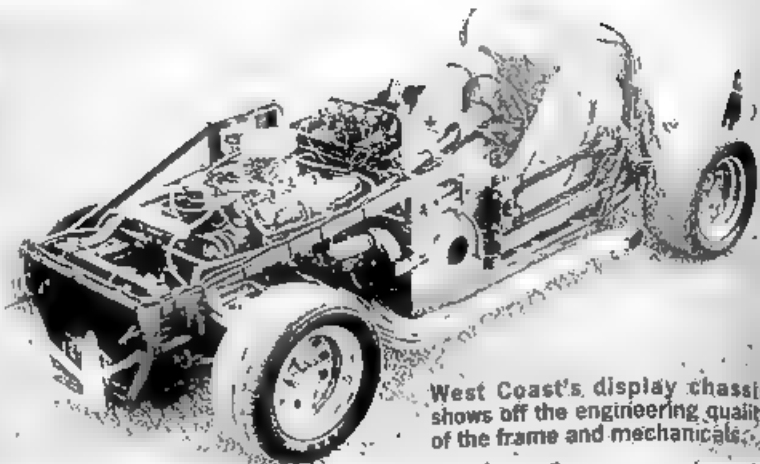
handling due to an antiquated chassis design. West Coast's repli-snake is a whole 'nother animal.

Cobra enthusiasts can tell right off that there's something different about the car. First, it has really outrageous lines, with a steroid-injected, musculo-bound shape that makes even an authentic big-block Cobra look a might puny by comparison. And check out that over-wide, voluptuous rump and slightly hooked nose. Clearly somebody's had their hands in the car-styling cookie jar.

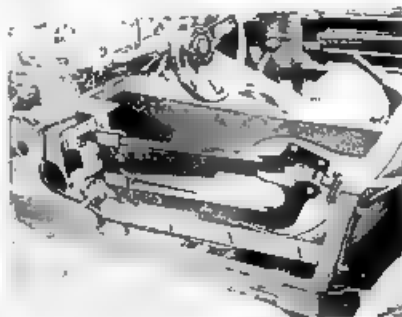
It's all for a noble purpose, because West Coast's cockpit is the biggest of all Cobra replicas, bar none (except for a Cobra stretch-limo we've seen—*egad*—but that doesn't count). No contortions are required to climb into this baby, and it feels positively roomy once you've settled in behind the wheel. Hey, even an Elvis pelvis could gyrate in here! And a vinyl-covered, padded coaming surrounds the cockpit, well above shoulder height, so you're sitting in the car rather than on it. How did West Coast manage such ergonomic extravagance? Well, this roadster is not only taller than the original, it also is a full 4 inches wider and 6 inches longer.

Just who is the evoker behind all this tradition-tampering anyway? Vern Redel, the president of West Coast, Inc., has been involved in the specialty car industry for some 15 years, initially as a dealer/builder for as many as 27 different companies. He says he learned firsthand how to correct a lot of the weak engineering typical of the then infant kit car industry, and finally got fed up and decided to strike out on his own to become a manufacturer. With some investment help from a well-heeled cousin, he took two years to develop and refine the car, particularly the chassis.

As pointed out in the cover story of last year's Cobra issue ("New Cobra Kits—Better Than The Original?" Nov. '91), the underlying structure is a box-tube spaceframe with main rails measuring 1½x4 inches. The ancillary framing, some 320 pieces in all, consists largely of 1x2-inch square tubing that stiffens the chassis in both the horizontal and vertical planes. Most of the frame is TIG-welded (Tungsten Inert Gas), a much more precise method than MIG-welding. Rather than simply filling in gaps with filler rod, TIG-welding is a helarc, electrical brazing process that creates a molten puddle in the metal



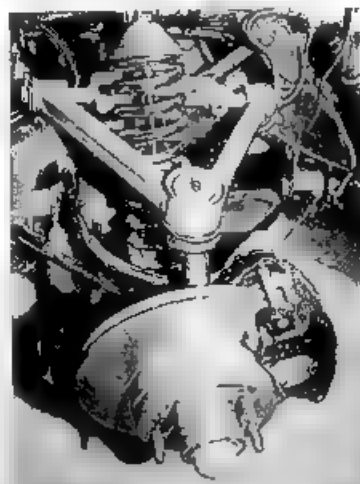
West Coast's display chassis shows off the engineering quality of the frame and mechanicals.



In addition to twin steel-beam door reinforcements, the chassis features an additional beam above the side rails.



For safety's sake and better weight distribution, the Kevlar fuel cell is mounted above and forward of the rear bumper. Note also the large-diameter, full-width rollbar.



for much greater penetration. It's more time consuming, but also stronger. Incidentally, West Coast subcontracts its frame fabrication to a manufacturer of dragsters and other racing vehicles that uses the same design and techniques on all its projects.

Welded to the spaceframe are twin plates of sheetmetal, with spun fiberglass insulation sandwiched between them to reduce both heat and noise. For reasons of safety, solid ½-inch steel plating surrounds the driveshaft tunnel and footboxes, and crumple zones have been designed into both front and rear bumpers.

Speaking of safety, Redel is fond of showing pictures of what happened to one of his cars in an accident when it ran up a curb and hit a lightpost. Even though the fiberglass suffered some damage, the post was sheared off completely, and the frame wasn't even bent. This is one stout piece of work. Redel's concern for safety appears in numerous other features of the car, such as the Kevlar fuel cell mounted above and forward of the rear bumper, and the twin-beam door reinforcements. He says the door hardware is 3200 pound-test grade. Also, the rollbar is not only full-width to protect both driver and passenger, but it measures 2½ inches in diameter (racing standard is only 2 inches).

Other particulars on the car include either a new custom-designed tubular A-arm front suspension or Ford Pinto pieces (Redel feels they're stronger than the Mustang II units commonly found on Cobra replicas), Ford SVO steering, and a Ford 9-inch rearend (no nar-

A new tubular A-arm front suspension softens the ride and improves tracking characteristics.

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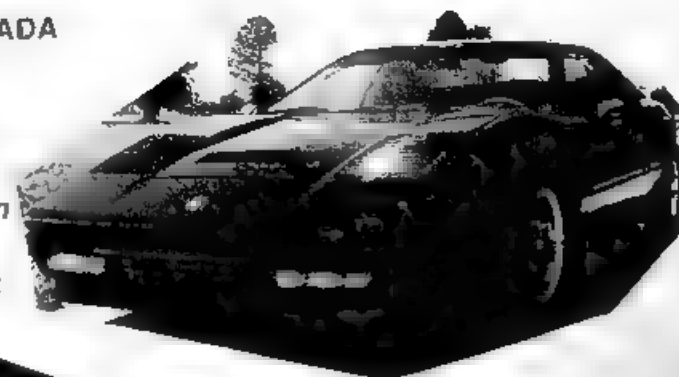
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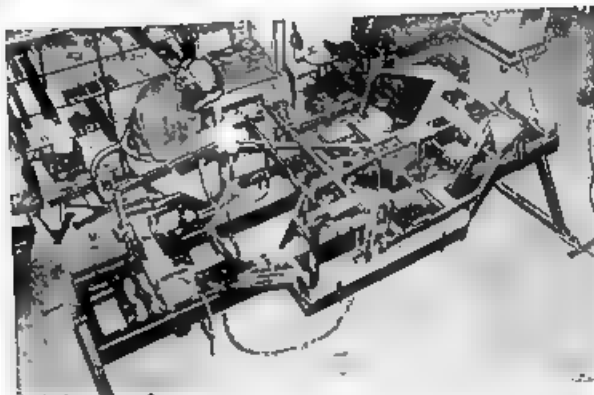
"Mirage" Number 1
in Fiero Body Conversion

Mirage 308 Body Conversion Kit

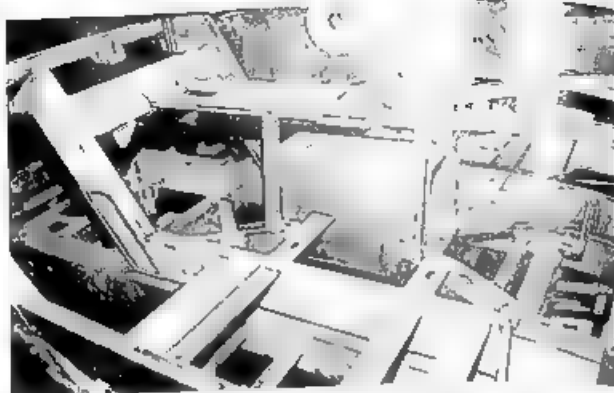


Mirage 328 Body Conversion Kit





Most of the frame is TIG-welded (instead of MIG-welded), a more time-consuming but also stronger type of fabrication.



Solid steel plating shields the cockpit from the driveshaft in the event of failure.

rowing is necessary due to the car's wider track. Recommended Blue Oval engines are either the 429 or its big brother the 460. The 460 has so much torque that it's often used in marine applications to power ski boats and even large cruisers—a fitting comparison, because when it comes to both size and solidness, the West Coast roadster is the flagship of the Cobra replica fleet. It's a big, heavy brute, and needs the low-end grunt. Indeed, more than 90 percent of Redel's cars are powered with big block engines.

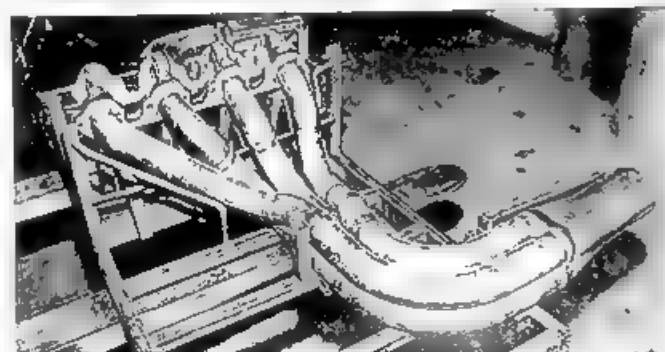
The one shown here not only has the 460 with twin 750-cfm Holleys, it was also in the process of being hooked up with an NOS fogger system. Unfortunately, the job was not complete when I checked out the car, but it did have the new front suspension (a \$1500 option). One advantage is that it offers more caster adjustment than the Mustang II unit for improved tracking, along with spring mounts located close to the outer ball joints to reduce ride harshness. In a vehicle of this bulk, these features make good sense.

Even though Redel said he hadn't fully dialed in the setup for my test drive, it felt fine, with good tracking, a compliant motion, and no bump steer. Overall, the feel of the car imparts a sense of security and comfort. This is a Cobra replica you can live with, whether high-speed highway cruising or carving up country roads.

In search of some hard performance numbers, I paid a visit to one of West Coast's long-time dealers, Custom Cars by Robbie, and took out one of his 429-powered cars equipped with a C-6 automatic. Despite the plain-vanilla powertrain and a bit of engine knock due to misadjusted timing, the car managed to scoot from 0 to 60 mph in a respectable 5.68 seconds. Stopping



Surrounding the tunnel are twin layers of sheet-metal with a layer of insulation between them. Note the frame reinforcements in both the horizontal and vertical planes.



Custom-welded headers are available as an option.

distance from 60 mph was a 223 feet—once you get this much steel rolling, it's not all that easy to bring it to a quick halt.

Robbie Robinson is an expert assembler and claims he's completed a West Coast kit in as little as 17 days. But then again, he's so experienced that he hangs the doors in less than a quarter the time the buildup manual states it should take. Redel says the slowest build-up of his kit he's ever heard of was a computer programmer's (who labeled every single component because he couldn't tell them apart) and he got the job done in a year. Prepping and painting the fiberglass body is the most time-consuming aspect of the assembly process. The rest is fairly quick, because the rolling chassis comes prewired and preplumbed,

ready for installation of the drivetrain. The price of the package starts at \$22,300 (as of this writing), a good chunk more than most Cobra kits, but of course you get much more preassembly work for the money—plus a lot more car. The King would approve. **KC**

SOURCES

West Coast, Inc.
Dept. KC07
6785 16 Mile Rd
Sterling Heights, MI 48077
519/736-7274

Custom Cars by Robbie
Dept. KC07
17115 Alburtus Ave.
Artesia, CA 90701
213/860-5092

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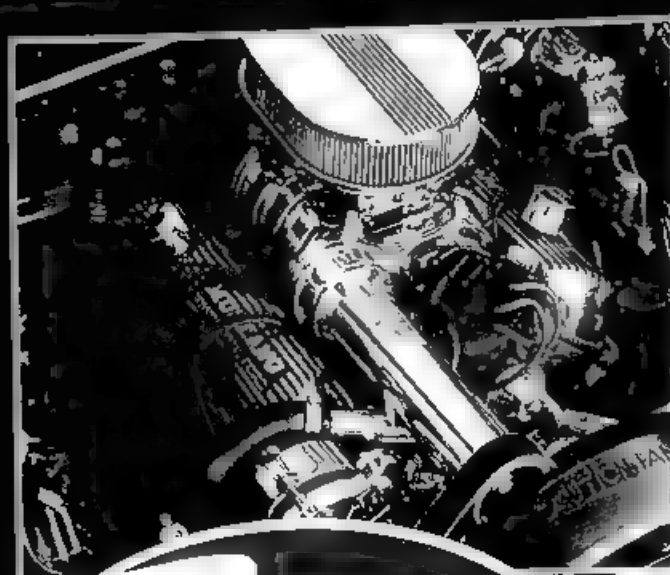
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MOTORS

Car Owners: Blue Cobra Replicar - Davis Block, Colorado Springs, CO, Red Cobra Replicar - Lee Folles, Estes Park, CO

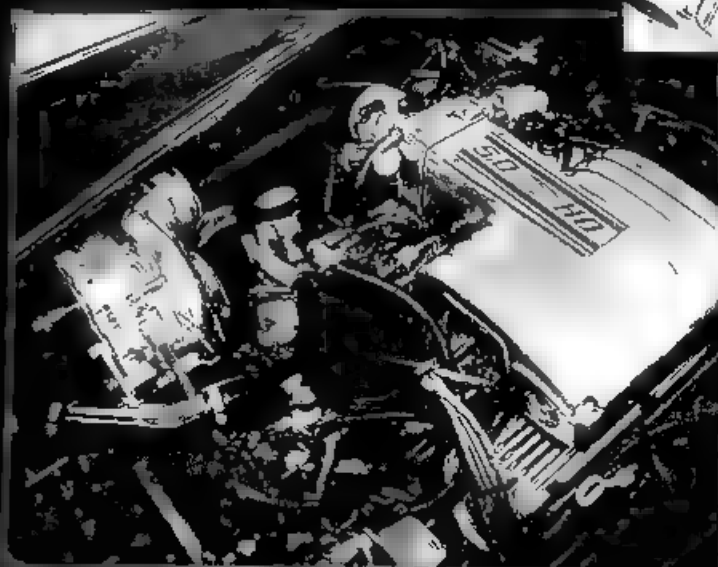
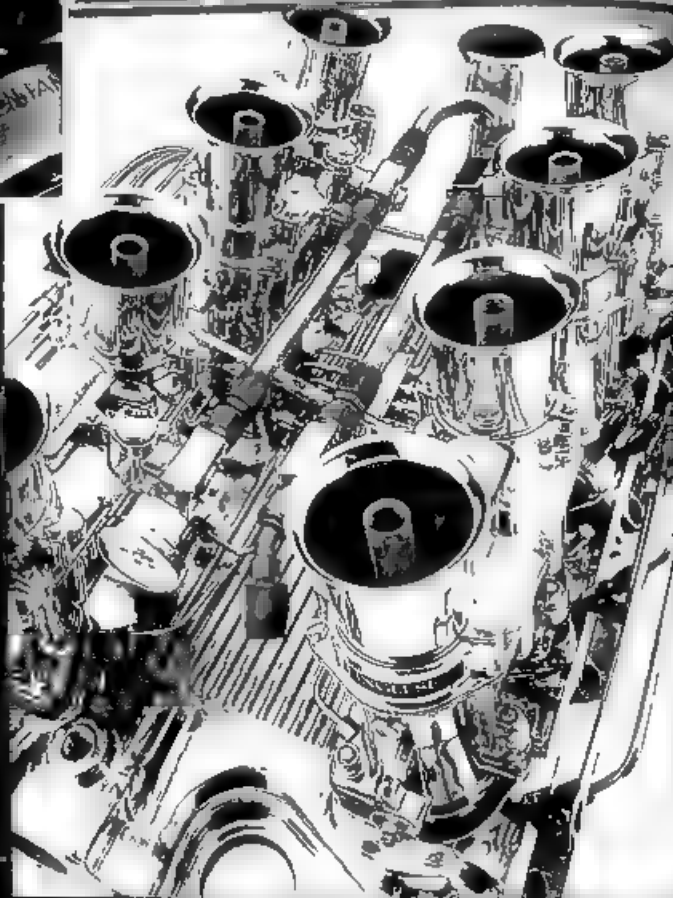
Photographer - John D. Haynes



Ford FEAST

A BLUE OVAL SPECIAL OF
PERFORMANCE PARTS
TO FEED YOUR KIT

By Chuck Coyne

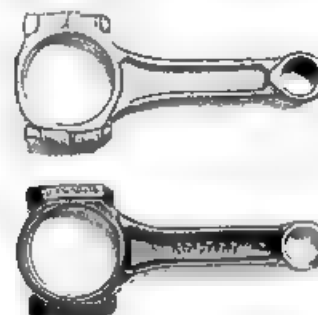


If the greatest joy of a kit car is building it yourself, then the second greatest thrill is dropping the hammer and frying the tires. Letting the engine's revs go wild and disappearing into a cloud of scalded rubber is its own reward, and the key to quickness is simple—build a burly Ford block with the right parts, pack the powerplant into your replica Cobra, GT40, or street rod, and get ready for some fast action.

There's a huge array of Blue Oval ammunition to choose from when stocking your Ford arsenal. From individual pieces to turn-key engines, aftermarket suppliers as well as Ford itself have spent countless hours wringing more and more performance from Ford's finest. To show you all the trick parts that have been developed would require an encyclopedia, so instead we've assembled a cross section of components to give you a strong start on your personal power quest.

SUPER SPARKY

MSD's billet distributor comes complete with a CNC machined housing milled from a solid piece of aluminum for close tolerances and high strength. The mechanical advance has a weight plate with the weights and springs on top for easy access, and extra springs and advance-limit bushings are included for fine tuning. The shaft is supported by ball bearings and the high-output magnetic pickup plugs into MSD's 6 7, and 8 Series ignitions. MSD has billet distributors to fit Ford's 351C, 351M, 400, 429 460, 289, 392, and 351 motors.



GOOD CONNECTION

The more power your pony motor makes, the stronger the connecting rods need to be. Crower makes both billet and forged rods from vacuum-degassed, aerospace-quality 4340 chrome-moly alloy steel. Crower has standard and custom length rods for 289/302, 351 Cleveland, and 429 Ford motors, as well as rod nuts and bolts.

Ford fanatics, take your pick (clockwise from top left): a B&M supercharger, an Edelbrock intake, Inglese's induction system, or a Vortech blower, shown here on a 5.0-liter Cobra replica from the S.C. Motorcar Company.

SPECIALTY DETAILS

The final touch for any Ford motor going into a Cobra replica is the addition of the correct reproduction accessories such as cast aluminum valve covers, air cleaner, oil pan, and intake manifold. Specialty Cobra of California has them and also hard-to-locate, but vital, throttle-control linkages and accessories. The company has just released a new billet 427 vibration damper and offers remanufactured four speed Top-oader transmissions with either close or wide ratios.



WAY COOL

Keeping the temperature down on your hot rod's Ford engine is easier with Hayden's Rapid Cool and Ultra Cool coolers and electric fans. They can help dissipate heat from your Cobra or rod's radiator, and cool engine oil and transmission fluid. A cooler drivetrain also helps keep the temp down in the passenger compartment, often a problem in Cobra kits.



RADICAL RATIOS

These beautiful pulleys from March not only look good in a killer kit car's

PAXTON'S PACKER

If you're looking for maximum impact from a compact package, consider Paxton's centrifugal supercharger. Compatible with a variety of induction systems such as carburetors, throttle bodies, or speed-density or Mass Air Flow electronic fuel injection, the Paxton Street Legal supercharger kit is C.A.R.B.-certified emissions legal for many installations. No welding or fabrication is required, and the kit is covered by a limited one-year, 100-percent parts and labor performance warranty. An extended lifetime limited warranty is available as well.



HEAD WRAP

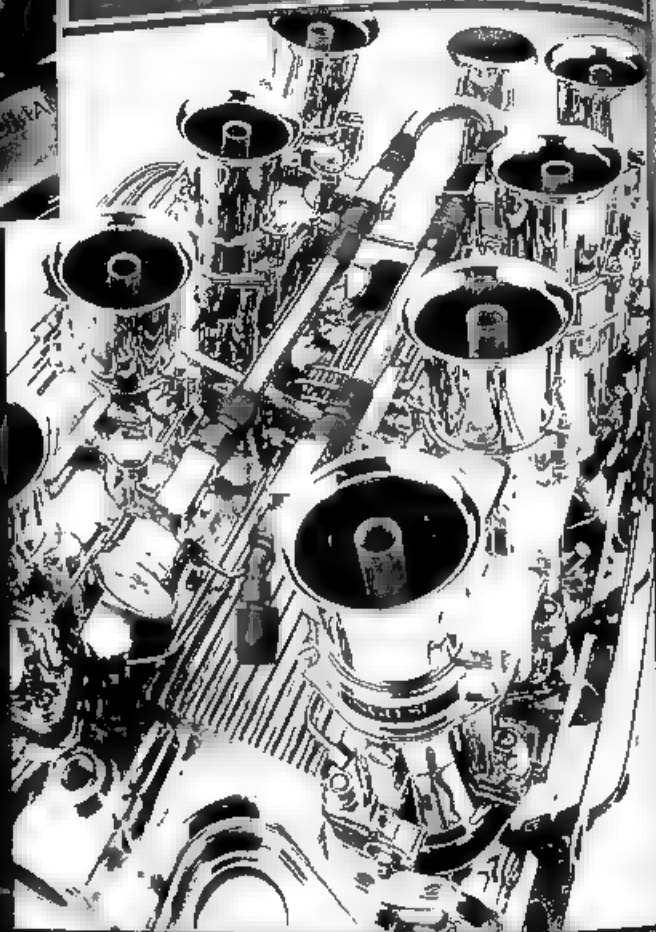
Headers are great for improving exhaust-gas routing, but they also work all too well as engine compartment heaters, especially in Cobra kits. With Thermo-Tec's header-insulation wrap covering the surface area of the header, the engine compartment stays cooler. Wrapping the exhaust system will also help reduce heat at the firewall and in the footboxes. For extended street use, Thermo-Tec has a Hi-Heat coating to protect the insulating wrap from oil and water stains.

engine bay, they'll put more power to the ground as well. By utilizing a lower ratio in the pulley's configuration, accessories such as the water pump and alternator are turned more slowly, requiring less engine power. Streetability of the electrical and cooling systems is not adversely affected by installing the new pulleys.

Ford FEAST

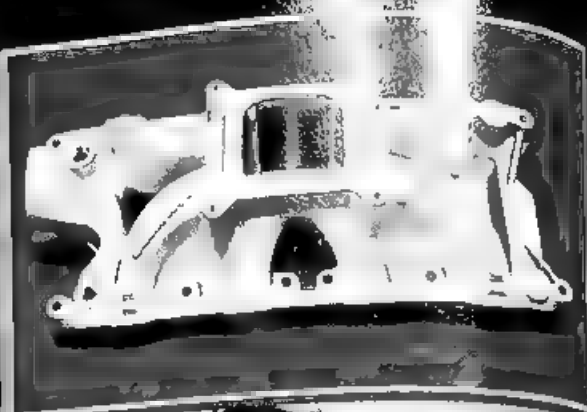
A BLUE OVAL SPECIAL OF
PERFORMANCE PARTS
TO FEED YOUR KIT

By Chuck Coyne



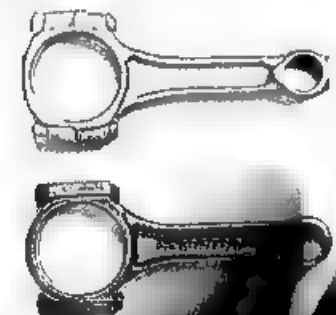
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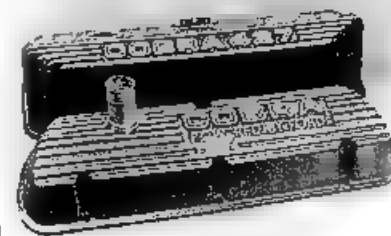
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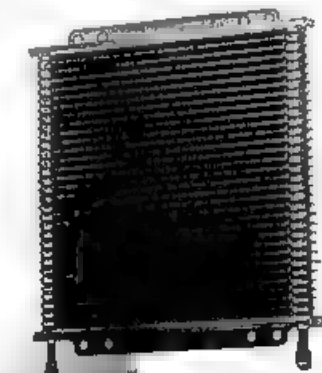
GOOD CONNECTION

The more... makes the... rods need... billet... deg... ch...



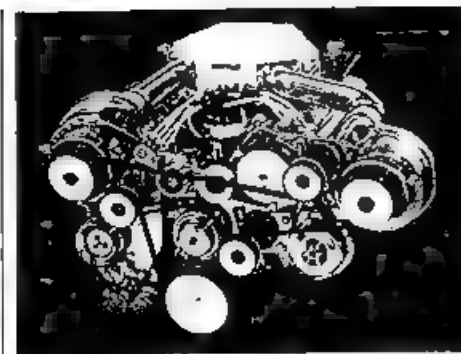
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WAY COOL

Keep the temperature down on your Ford engine is easier with... Rapid Cool... Ultra... They... cool... A...



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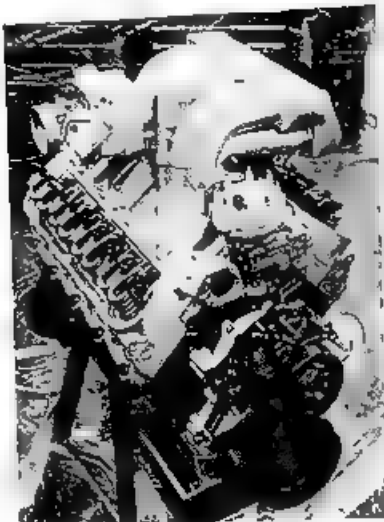
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engine bay... put more power to the ground as we... a lower... the... configuration... accessories such... the... and a... more... less... Streetab... ing system... ed by ns...

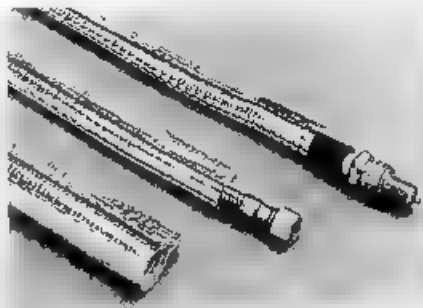


SMOG-LEGAL SMALL-BLOCKS

CTX Motorcars, a Texas-based Cobra builder, now offers high-performance EPA-certifiable 302 and 351 EFI engines. These computer-controlled engines are built with EGR valves, smog pumps, and catalytic converters to meet EPA regulations; the firm claims there's no significant loss of torque, power, or fuel economy.

HEADS UP

Aluminum Trick Flow heads from Will-Burt come with 1.940-inch intake and 1.600-inch exhaust valves and can be fitted with optional sizes of up to 2.080/1.650-inch. Claimed to provide a 40hp increase, the heads come equipped with 64cc combustion chambers, raised exhaust ports, magnesium bronze valve guides machined for Teflon valve seals, and a minimum deck thickness of 0.600 inch. Valve tip travel is minimized at 0.600-inch lift at 7000 rpm with 1.61:1 rocker arms. Each set weighs 54 pounds and all components are compatible with unleaded and racing fuels. Standard intake and exhaust manifolds will bolt right on, as will all stock emissions-control connections. Will-Burt also has cast-iron Trick Flow heads available for the 289, 302, and 351 Windsor blocks.



UP YOUR SLEEVE

Available in five sizes, Thermo-Sleeve from Thermo-Tec, prevents heat build-up and damage to wires and hoses. The bright, metallic aluminumized surface coating blocks up to 90 percent of underhood radiant heat, and the fireproof sleeving is flexible for easy installation. Packaged in 3-foot rolls, the sleeves can be used for spark plug wires, fuel lines, oil lines, and battery cables.

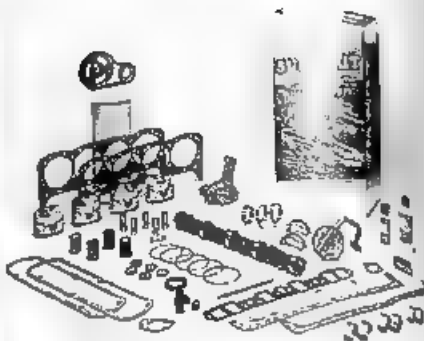


CRANKY, CRANKY

Crank up the cubes of your 429/460 with a billet or forged crankshaft from 38 KIT CAR.

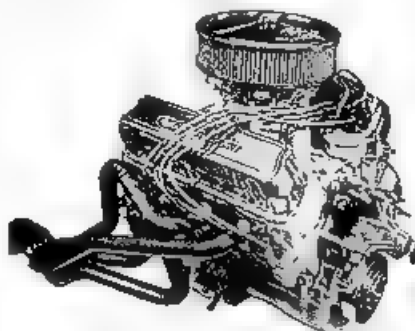
FLYWEIGHT CLUTCH

Your specialty machine should get off the line quicker with a light-weight 5.5 multi-disc clutch-and-flywheel from 10,000 R.P.M. Speed Equipment. Composite components are used to lighten the weight, making the complete three-disc clutch and flywheel assembly weight as little as 12 pounds.



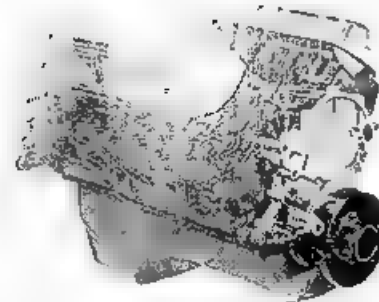
READY REBUILD

A Perfect Circle Victor Super Kit will provide you with eight new .030-inch oversize hypereutectic or forged aluminum pistons, chrome-moly (or moly-faced) rings, tri-metal bearings, a gasket set, a camshaft, valve springs, lifters, double-row full-roller timing chain and sprockets, a high-volume oil pump and pick-up screen, and a brass expansion plug kit. Other items needed for a quality high-performance engine rebuild include plastigauge, engine bearing bolt guards, bearing and cam lube, and assembly tolerances and specifications.



FORD'S 5.0L GT-40 SVO

From Ford SVO comes a great new long-block engine assembly, the 5.0L GT-40 SVO built at the Cleveland engine plant. Complete long-block includes the block and cast-iron SVO GT-40 cylinder heads, SVO GT-40 valvetrain kit with springs, retainers, keepers, seals, swirl-polished stainless valves with undercut stems, and an SVO hydraulic Hi-Per roller cam. Valve lift is 0.480 inch with a 224-degree duration (intake and exhaust) at 0.050-inch valve lift. The valvetrain comes complete with timing chain, rocker arms, roller tappets, and pushrods. Also included are the crankshaft, rods, pistons, oil pump and pickup, oil pan, valve covers, front cover, water pump, damper, flywheel, spark plugs, and related long-block engine parts. The engine is rated by Ford at 285 hp (off-road use only) at a 9.0:1 nominal compression ratio. Installing a slightly milder camshaft qualifies the engine for street duty.

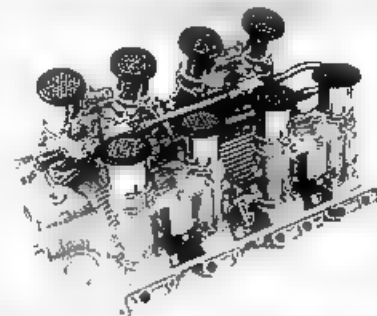


MARINE-DUTY 351

Ford's SVO R&D group has combined the strength of a Ford Marine 351 HO SVO block with free-breathing SVO aluminum J302 heads. The result is a long-block package that includes a forged crank, hypereutectic pistons, and a valvetrain that will give your project car a dyno-rated engine with 385 hp at 5750 rpm and 377 lb-ft of torque at 4500 rpm. The engine has 10.0:1 compression and comes complete—all you need to add is a carburetor, headers, ignition module, spark plug wires, and accessory drives. The heads are aluminum SVO Windsor high flow units with stainless-steel 1.94/1.60-inch intake/exhaust valves and feature minor porting and three-angle valve seats.

WONDERFUL WEBERS

Nothing looks as exotic on a big-block's intake system as a brace of Webbers, and Fast Freddy's can help you put together a package that will wow them at the car shows and smoke 'em on the streets. The Weber/Fast Freddy's system includes a throttle linkage that features central mounting, forged Heim's, sealed ball-bearing bell crank and Weber-style stamped inner connecting links for bind-free operation of the IDA or IDF Weber carbs. Fast Freddy's has manifolds for the big block with either vertical or angled installation of the carbs on your 352, 390, 427, or 428 motor.



MORE VALVES, PLEASE

If you want to add an exotic touch to your exotic toy, look no farther than ARAO's 32 valve cylinder heads for Ford 429/460 and 302/351 engines. No extensive machine work is needed to install them. The heads accept all popular aftermarket intake and exhaust manifolds and can be supplied with or without water cooling. The valves are pushrod operated from the stock-location camshaft and any aftermarket flat tappet or roller cam and followers can be used. The heads are machined from billet aluminum with the intake valves inclined at 12 degrees (15 degrees for the big-block). The four-valves-per-cylinder setup allows a smaller combustion chamber and positions the spark plug in the center of the chamber.



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CROWER COMPONENTS

Crower can help set up your valve train with components such as valve springs, roller rockers, keepers, and stud nuts. Its 17-4PH stainless-steel rockers have oversized Torrington needle bearings, sure-lock rocker nuts, and a 52100 ball race, steel-tip roller. The body has plenty of room for large-diameter, heavy-duty springs and high-lift cams and is guaranteed against breakage. Available for the 221-351 Windsor in 16:1, 165:1 and 17:1 ratios, 1.65:1, 1.73:1, 1.75:1 and 1.8:1 ratios for the 302/351C-400; and 1.73:1 for the 429-460.

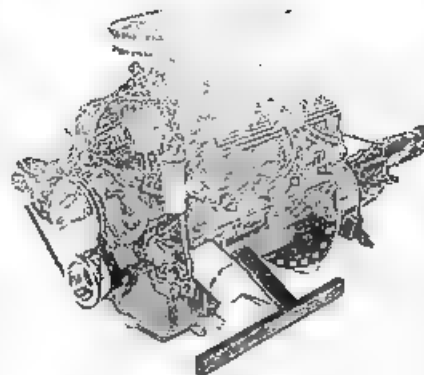


SPEED SPARKS

MSD's ignition is compatible with most OEM Ford and aftermarket ignition systems, and produces powerful multiple sparks during each firing of the spark plugs. This results in a consistent burn of the mixture for better fuel economy, quicker starting, more power, and less plug fouling. The MSD 6AL also has a built-in rev limiter that can be adjusted with plug-in modules so you won't over-rev your engine.

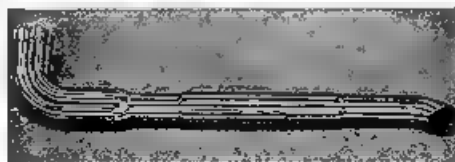
STOKED STROKER

Stretch your 289/302's cubic capacity by installing a stroker crankshaft from Crower. Just about any stroke combination is available from the Crower-machined Ford 1045 forged crankshafts. Crower uses a jumbo radius fillet and a Crower exclusive oiling system, and each crank is heat treated and nitrided. Billet cranks are also available, as are billet and forged cranks for the 351 block.



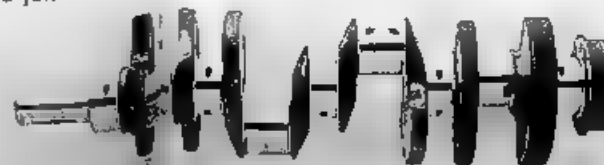
JASPER PACKAGES

Just for Cobra builders are Jasper's 302 and 351W Cobra kit car packages. These engines are built with either forged or hypereutectic pistons, 90:1 compression ratio, ARP rod bolts, Cloyes double roller timing chain, Wolverine Blue Racer cam, 64cc combustion chambers, new valves, chrome-moly retainers, hardened valve locks, performance springs, positive valve seals, a new harmonic balancer, and chrome valve covers. The crank, rods, and pistons are balanced, the block is square decked, main saddles aligned, and the cylinders torque-plate honed. A variety of horsepower ratings is offered, from the 275hp 302 to the 390hp 351W. Also available is Jasper's new custom-built four speed Toploader with bearings approximately 1/8 inch larger than on the original Ford Toploader.



SPECIAL STAINLESS

Looking for a pair of pipes to finish off your Cobra? Try Stainless Specialties 100-percent type-304, stainless-steel side exhausts. The firm also manufactures the Turbo-Tube Muffler, with all the eye-pleasing looks of a tube muffler and also baffles for an ear-pleasing exhaust note. Available plain or polished, stock or custom, the firm's exhaust systems can be fitted with baloney tube-style echo cans for that finishing touch of performance.



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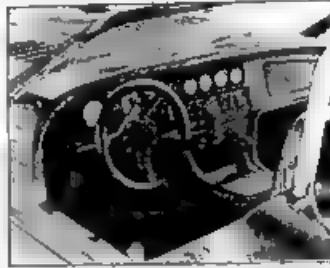
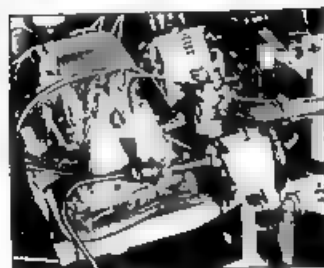
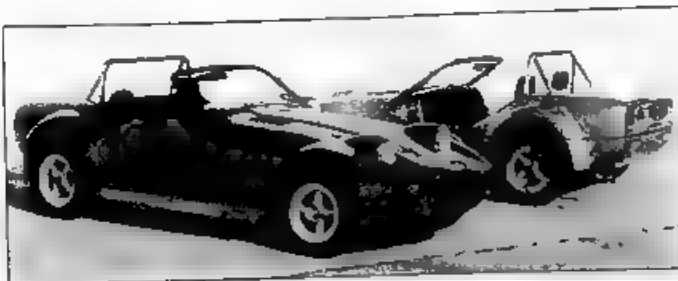
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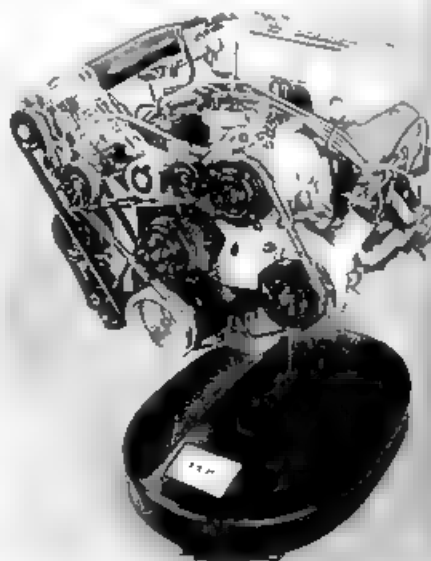
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Either Mallory's dual-point mechanical advance (left) or vacuum advance distributor would be a good addition to your Ford power equation. The mechanical unit comes with a factory-set advance curve designed for maximum performance, but also allows for further adjustment. The other type has adjustable vacuum and mechanical advance to allow tuning for the best street performance

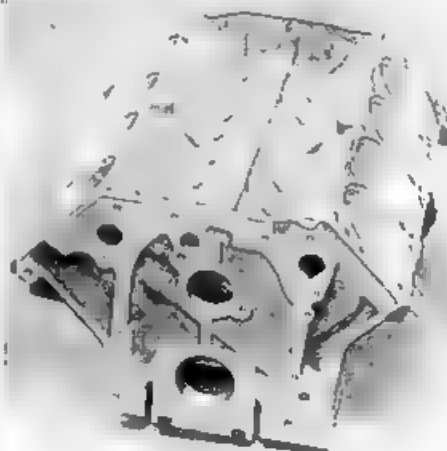


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Vortech has a supercharger that fits Ford's 5.0-liter, 351, and 460 engines. Pulleys allow you to adjust the boost of this gear-driven V1 centrifugal supercharger from five psi (good for regular street use) to 11 psi at 6000 rpm for racing. The Vortech's gears are lubricated with oil taken from the engine's lubrication system

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If you're looking for a high-performance intake manifold for your specialty cruise missile, check out Edelbrock's Victor Jr 302 designed to fit the 289/302. Compatible with OEM cast iron or aftermarket T.F.S., A.R., or equivalent heads, the Victor Jr 302 provides peak power from 3500 to 8000 rpm. There is no rear water crossover, and the port exit size of 1.90x1.08 inches allows enough material to open the ports up to 2.10x1.25 inches for the truly heavy breathers. Edelbrock has many other Ford manifolds, from dual quad, two-plane intakes for the 289/302, to a variety of configurations for 351s, all the way up to the 429 and 460 Ford V8s.



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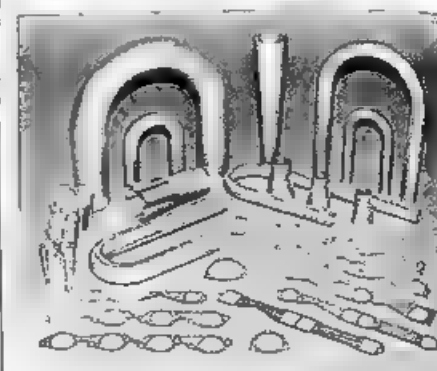
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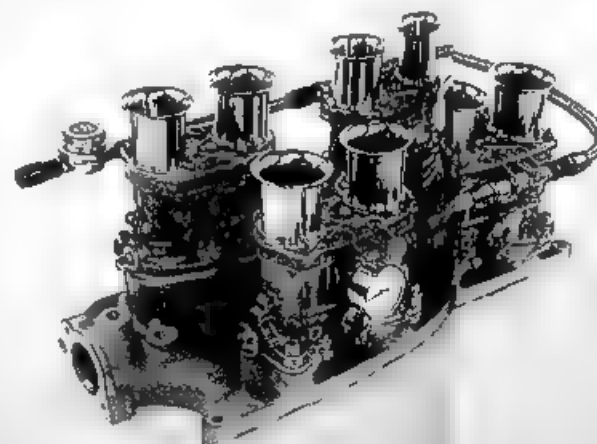
COOL OPERATOR

The Accel Super Coil's long intense spark should improve the performance of most kit cars. The unit features a unique winding design with premium grade magnetic wire and Mylar construction. Filled with oil under vacuum to enable high output, its large case provides ample surface area for cool operation and its tall tower and internal voltage dam prevents flashover.



TALKING HEADERS

Generic headers for your specialty car? Hardly seems right. Headers By Ed can be custom-fabricated to precise standards, exactly matching the specifications of your car, powerplant, and drivetrain. You can also build your own exhaust headers using the wide variety of components manufactured by the company.



COBRA-STYLE INTAKES

Add some exotica to your 289/302-powered specialty car with Fast Freddy's Weber IDA or IDF manifolds and carbs. Also available is a Cobra-style IDA. The systems come fully assembled and include a Synchrometer synchronization tool and instructions. Velocity stacks, filter, screens, and other accessories are also available.

QUICK-CHANGE ARTIST

If your mid-engine specialty car needs a five-speed transaxle, Autos Unlimited, Inc. has just the ticket. Fitted with an 8-inch hypoid ring-and-pinion with a final drive ratio of 3.00:1, the 850-QC is a quick-change transaxle that allows for easy mods of the final drive ratio. It is equipped with ratios of 3.27:1 for First gear, 2.13:1 for Second, 1.57:1 for Third, 1.23:1 for

Fourth, and 1.00:1 for Fifth gear. All forward speeds are fully synchronized. A Hurst five-speed shifter is fitted to the transaxle as is a McLeod hydraulic throwout bearing.

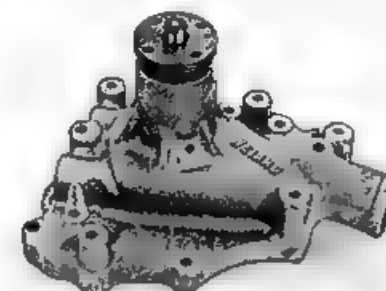


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A lightweight-aluminum water pump from Weiland will save 30 to 50 percent of the weight of a cast-iron pump, and it features a 3/4-inch shaft and 3/8-inch pilot riding in heavy-duty precision bearings. Polished or satin finish pumps are available for Ford's Boss 351, 351C, 351M/400, 302-351W, and 429-460.



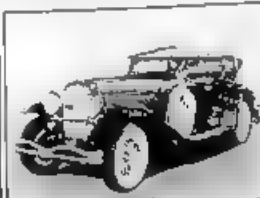
GETTIN' SHIFTY

Ford's AOD automatic four-speed transmission is popular on hot kits, and B&M's Transpak should only enhance its popularity. Available in two stages, the RV/Heavy Duty model provides firmer shifts, yet is compatible with street driving, while the Street/Strip stage provides a much harder and faster shift for the ultimate in performance.

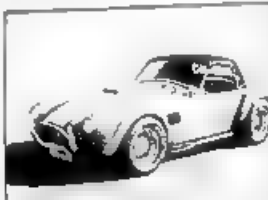


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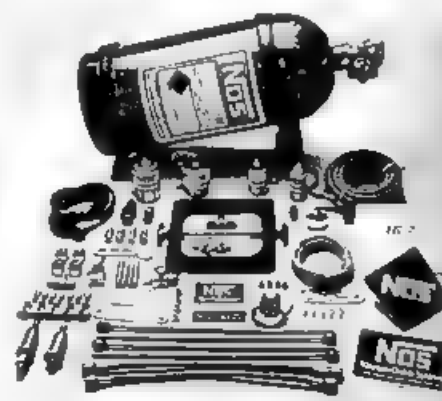
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A complete wiring kit will help install your Ford or Chevy engine into any Cobra replicar. The J&J Custom Harness, Inc. package includes 17 fuses, two circuit breakers, and comes in seven pieces with all connections marked for easy installation. All connectors included with the kit will work with any electronic or standard ignition and any type of steering column. The fuse block cover is computer engraved to personalize each installation.



GO-GO GAS

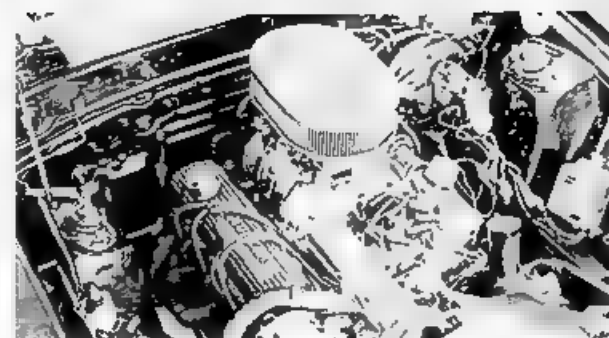
Nitrous Oxide injection works wonders on any fearless Ford-powered specialty car. The Nitrous Oxide Systems (NOS) crew has developed systems that are easy to install and provide a real jolt. The easiest to work with is the Power Shot plate injection system, which adds 90/125 hp from Holley- or Q-jet-carbureted motors by injecting nitrous and gasoline from a plate installed between the carb and manifold. Other units range in complexity and power potential up to the Pro Shot Fogger II that NOS claims will add 500 hp to a modified big-block.

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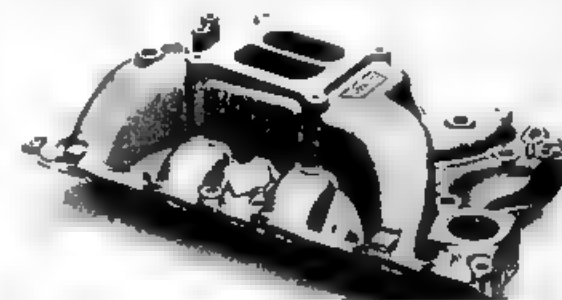
HEAVY BREATHERS

Weiland's new intake for the 429-460 blocks is a dual-plane, 180-degree manifold for standard-port wedge heads. Designed for both street and select competition applications, the manifold can be fitted with carburetors ranging from the stock-spread bore and 600-cfm vacuum-secondary carbs to 850-cfm double pumpers. The Action Plus unit is aluminum, weighs just 20 pounds, and is only one of the 21 manifolds and other accessories that Weiland has for Ford's mighty V8s—from dual-quad high-rise manifolds to spacer kits that allow the use of 351 Cleveland-type intakes on the 351M/400 engine.



BLOWN SMALL-BLOCKS

Turn your 302-powered kit car into a street screamer with B&M's blower for small-block V8s. It has been designed with three gears in the drive system in order to provide clearance for the Ford front-mounted distributor, and engineered to provide enough room to be compatible with any OEM or aftermarket distributor. Boost can be varied by using differing combinations of pulleys.



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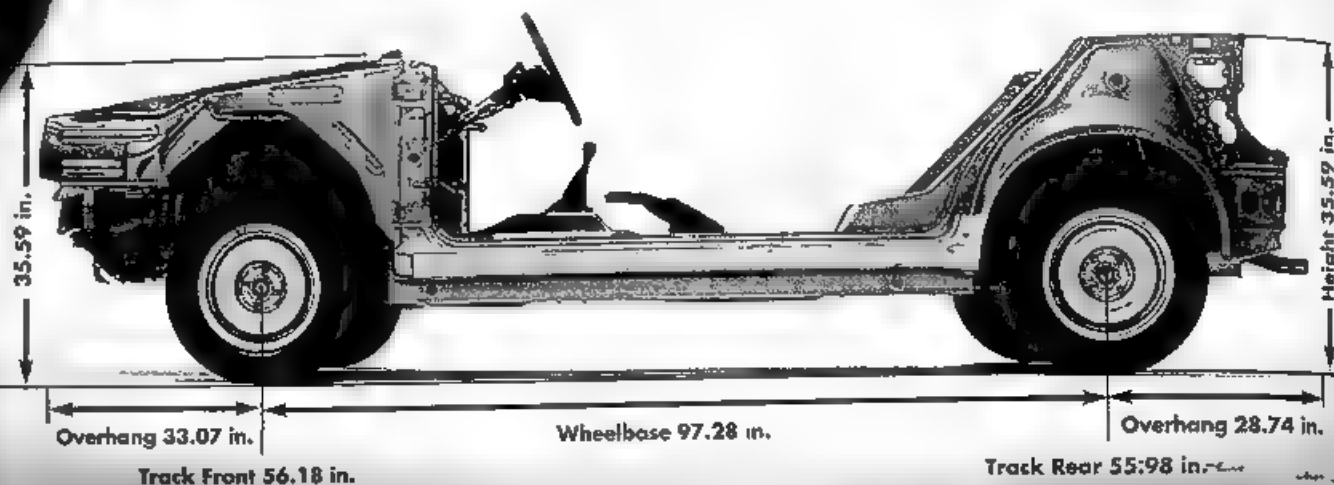
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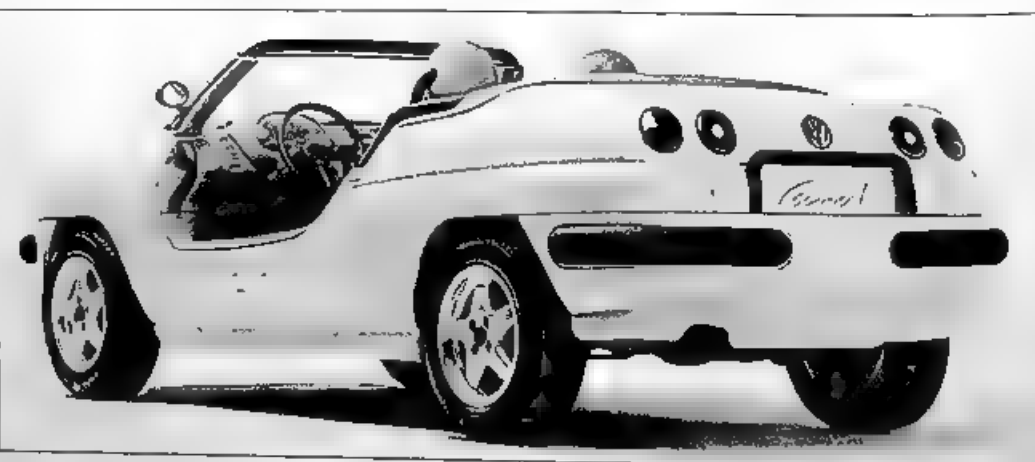
HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO CREATE YOUR OWN CAR CONCEPT—AND MAYBE WIN A FEW BUCKS, TOO

You may have heard of Volkswagen's Vario I and II, two concept cars based on a modified Golf chassis. Well, it turns out that these were not

merely design exercises, but demonstrated the VW platform's potential for creating niche-market vehicles. A specially reinforced version of this chassis is now available to companies interested

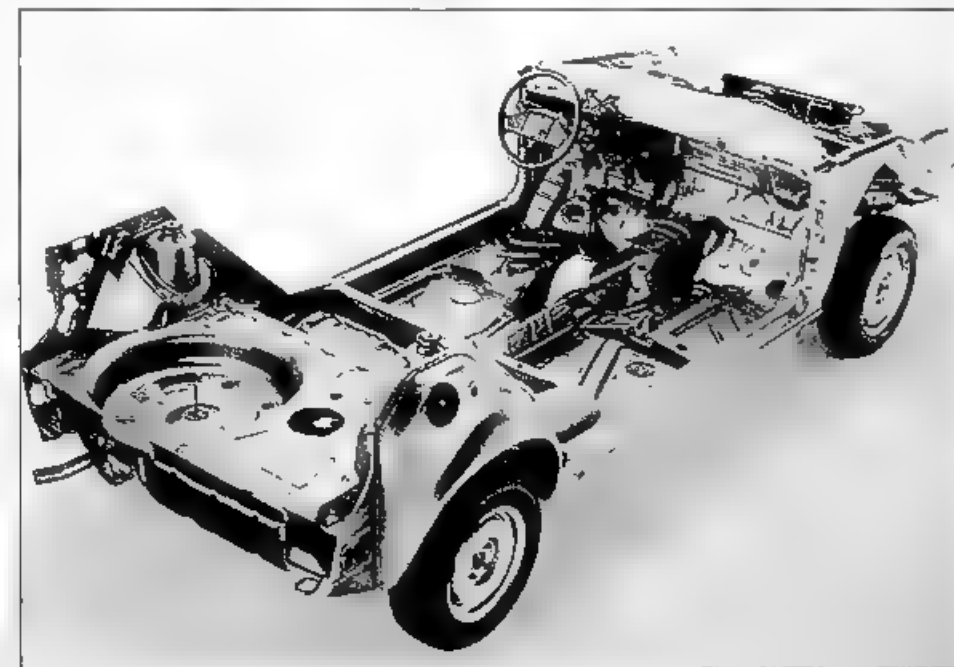
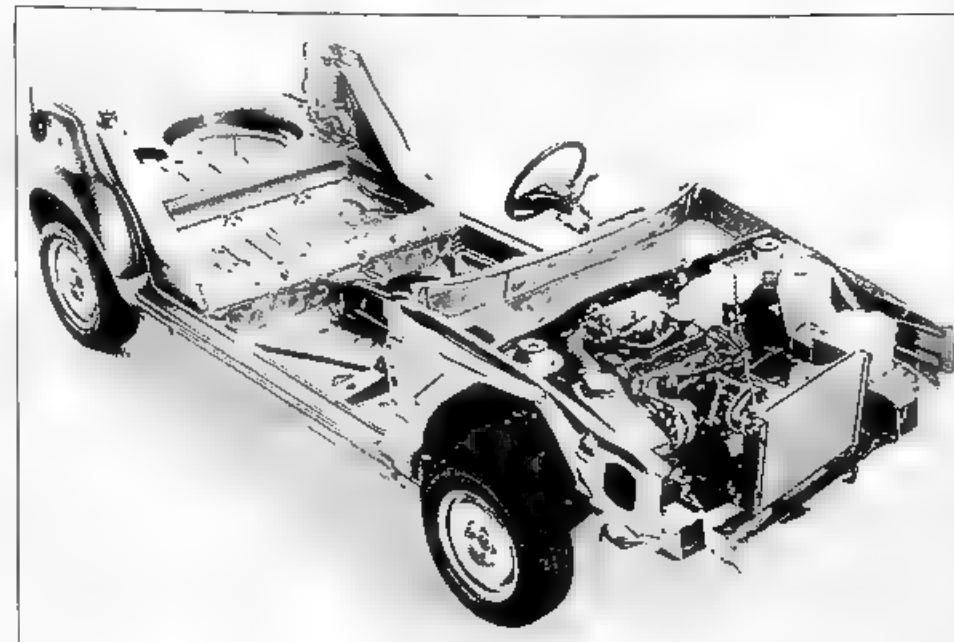
in creating a limited-production line of cars. Using the already proven Golf chassis greatly reduces the time and expense of such an endeavor because all the basic engineering R&D has been done and the designer's creativity is free to wander. (Interested manufacturers should contact Fred Hansen, Dept. KC07, Industrial Sales, Volkswagen of America, 3800 Hamlin Rd., Auburn Hills, MI 48326.)

Volkswagen's Vario I is more than just a design exercise—it shows how you can transform an existing chassis with imagination and creativity.



This fact has not been lost on us here at *Kit Car*. After all, the VW Beetle platform has supported untold numbers of specialty cars, so why not create a body kit for the Golf chassis with all its engineering refinements? To that end, we are pleased to announce a design contest for readers of *Kit Car* magazine. Shown here are several views of the Golf chassis. We suggest you photocopy this spread, or attach tissue paper over it, and let your design concepts flow through your pencil.

Send in only one entry per person by September 1, 1992, to: *Kit Car* Design Contest, 8490 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069 (no phone calls please). A panel of judges, including the director of Volkswagen's Design Studio, Verna Kloos, and instructors from the renowned Art Center College of Design, will pick the winner. Prizes furnished by Volkswagen U.S. will include two \$500 U.S. Savings Bonds, one for the Student category (18 years and under) and one for the Designer category (19 years and older). Please be sure to indicate your age and birthdate on your entry. Second- and third-place prizes will be \$200 and \$100 respectively for each category. Honorable-mention prizes from VW's Fahrvergnügen catalog will also be awarded to a



selection of entrants in each category. Award winners will be announced in the January '93 issue of *Kit Car*. (All contest submissions become the property of

Petersen Publishing Company and may be used for publication at its discretion.)

So get out your drawing board and pencils and get busy! **KC**

JUST LAUNCHED, CORBETT'S PATRIOT GOES BALLISTIC

By David Fetherston

All too often the Detroit auto manufacturers' search for excellence has become an exercise in self defeat. A perfect example is the disappointing story of the Fiero. Though designed as a simple two-seat commuter, its performance potential soon became obvious and Pontiac's engineers eventually created a spirited sports car. After four years of development to get it just right, sales hit the skids.



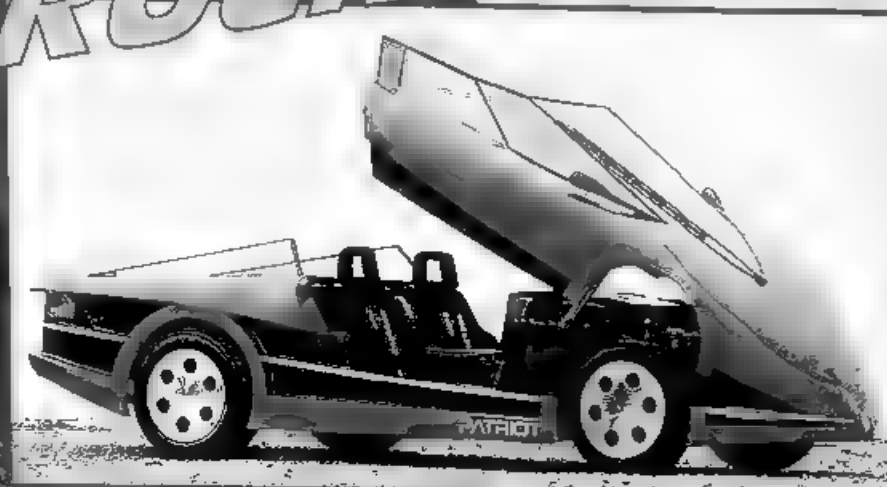
and the vehicle was canceled. As an epitaph, the Fiero did prove that Detroit automakers can produce significant American design and technology.

Fortunately, this tale of stymied potential did not end there. A clever young engineer and designer from Long Beach, California, Adrian Corbett of Corbett Automotive Design (CAD), picked up on all the Fiero's innovative engineering, and, not wanting to let it go to waste, has repackaged it into a spacy-looking exotic car of the future—one that you can buy or build today.

Not surprisingly, Corbett is a product of the California aerospace industry. His background is in industrial engineering, with projects ranging from the space shuttle to rocket-engine design. The aging of the space race and the slowing of Cold War ten-



THE ROCKETEER



sions prompted him to abandon the aerospace industry in hopes of setting up his own automotive consulting and production company.

Corbett's first vehicle was a VW Beetle-based Lamborghini Countach clone that he found creatively and financially unrewarding. The Patriot is his second model. Like other Fiero-rebody manufacturers, he chose the Pontiac as a donor for several reasons—decent handling, reasonable pricing, and ease of repair. Also, it can readily be made to perform with enough vigor to get your blood pumping.

The Fiero's mid-engine layout provides Ferrari 328-like handling because Corbett uses only the '88 model, the best for brakes and suspension, for his turn-key conversion. The demonstrator, shown here, also benefits from a refreshed 2.8-liter V6, which is further enhanced with a Miller Woods turbo. This package ups the power rating into the low 200s and gives this rocket-coupe a zippy throttle response that befits its ballistic lines.

The restructuring of the Fiero donor car began with slicing off the roof and the fitting of a three-piece subframe. The side frames run in a U-shaped outline of the original door opening, maintaining the stiffness of the chassis. An X-member welded underneath the frame further ensures structural rigidity.

The body displays a high level of fiberglass workmanship with superb finish and fit. The two major body

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID FETHERSTON

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panels on this coupe are large and required extensive engineering to construct. The layup is reinforced with Coremat for rigidity and prevention of cloth transfer.

The dash is fresh, too, but uses all the original Fiero equipment. A *Star Wars* quantity pervades the cockpit, with its sweeping shapes semi surrounding the driver and information panels running into the left-hand door panel.

The body is clad onto the bare structure of the Fiero by using a complete lower tub with a break-line running around the vehicle in a recessed lower valance. The upper clamshell sections are then fitted atop of the lower structure with a set of Thompson Saginaw ball-screw drives.

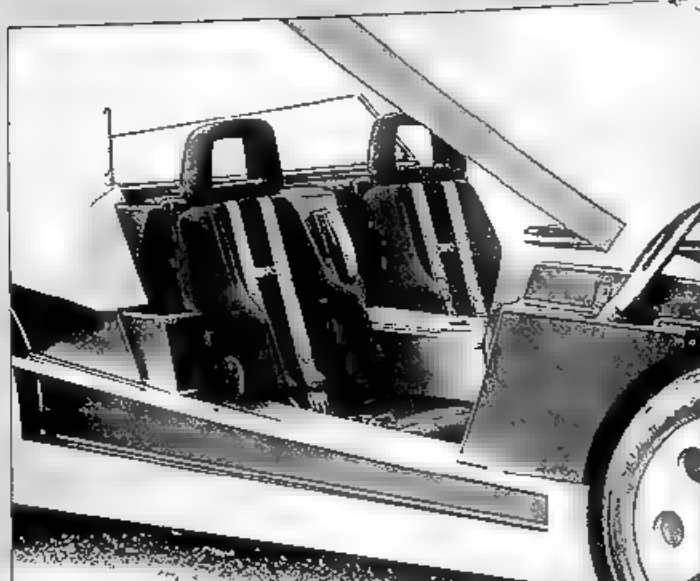
The complete conversion requires 22 molded fiberglass panels. The main body sections have a hefty tubular-steel inner structure that runs around at shoulder height to replace the side-crash protection. It also provides a firm outer ring so the roof section can be pulled down tight to make the coupe virtually rattle-free. To enter and exit the cockpit, only the front half of the clamshell needs to be opened. Engine access requires lifting the rear shell.

Another neat touch is the pop-down headlights that have been modified from Pontiac Grand Prix units. The drop-down is only four inches, so the small rectangular high intensity lamps are narrow slits of light.

The rest of the car remains basically all-factory Fiero. This includes four-wheel disc brakes, fully independent A-arm front suspension with sway bar and adjustable gas shocks, and a strut/coil sprung, trailing-link design with lower lateral toe links on the rear suspension. The mid-engine layout is not changed at all, and the Patriot retains its near 50-50 front-to-rear weight balance.

As a complete factory turn-key,

56 KIT CAR



Recaro seats and shoulder belts are included with the Stage III kit



An aluminum rail surrounds the body for increased crash protection



Extra-long side-mirror stalks span the distance from the canopy to the edge of the body panel.

...tries a tag... \$5,000... a bit... the car... available as a kit that you can build yourself on any '84 through '88 Pontiac Fiero. The installation is an involved process and requires an extensive amount of construction time. Stage I (\$8995, as of this writing) has all the major body panels and hardware. Most builders would probably opt for the Stage II kit, which goes for \$16,995 and includes minor hardware as well, such as the windshield, upholstery, and headlights. The full kit runs \$24,500 and includes virtually everything—body, alarm, alloy wheels, tires, and a super stereo system.

Out on the road, the Patriot exhibits all the grace and pace of a fine little sports coupe. There are no shakes or shimmies and the handling is well balanced and undisturbed by surface variations. Corbett claims 0 to 60 mph in about 5.5 seconds—this coupe is motivated when you slam your right foot to the metal. (Look for a

twin-turbo version as well in the near future.) We went blasting about the countryside around Lompoc, California, and found the Patriot shines high on the grin factor. The smiles and waves it gets from passing traffic give it the same sort of status as a Countach or some other wild exotic. Corbett's first real car exhibits all the right ingredients for a successful launch. **KC**

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Spotting the Differential

PHOTOGRAPHY ISAAC MARTIN

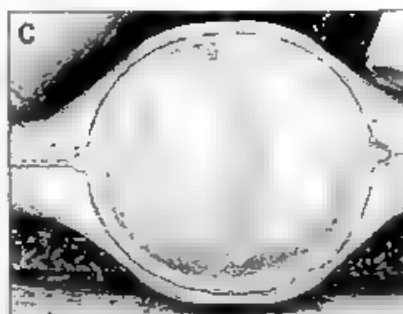
By Jim Losee and Isaac Martin

Whatever type of powerplant you install in your kit car, be it a garden-variety 302 Ford or a monster 502 Chevy big-block belting out 550 lb-ft of tire-melting torque, transferring the power to the ground is the job of the rear end. If you use a live-axle rear end instead of the popular yet expensive Jaguar fully independent type, there is only one way to go for both strength and lightness, and that is with Ford's 9-inch rear end.

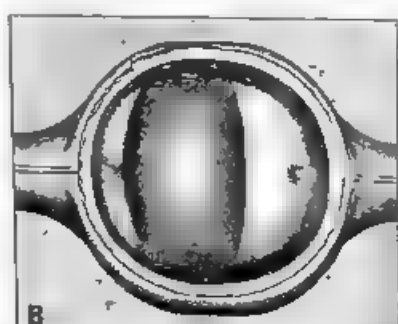
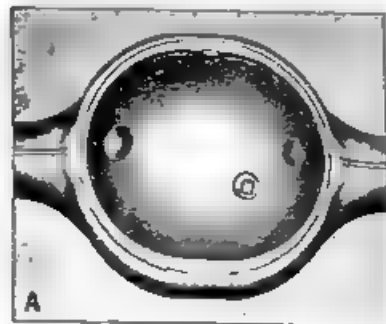
Ford's unit is preferred not only for its legendary strength but also for the plethora of aftermarket parts available for it. You can get almost any gear ratio, along with strong center sections and narrowed axles of almost any width. With a 9-inch, you've got it all.

Due to the complex selection and history of the Ford 9-inch rear end, we contacted experts Ray, John, and Charlie Currie of Currie Enterprises, one of the premier Ford 9-inch builders and assemblers in the country, for an in-depth look at the different styles of 9-inch rear end housings—center sections or pumpkins.

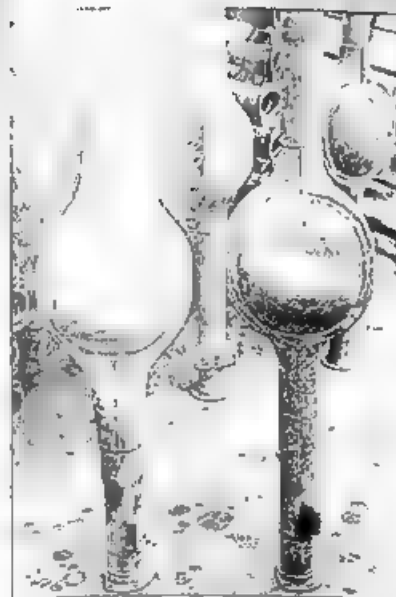
They also pointed out where to measure for custom-width applications. Pictures explain better than words all the major differences and aspects, so follow along as we go spotting the differential.



There are essentially three types of Ford 9-inch rear end housings. The early type (A) has a rounded rear surface, while the middle-generation housing (B) has a flat surface and a bulge on the driver's side. The late-model housing (C) is similar to the mid-generation, but if you look closely you'll see that the housing is of a heavier-duty design and will withstand more punishment.



58 KIT CAR



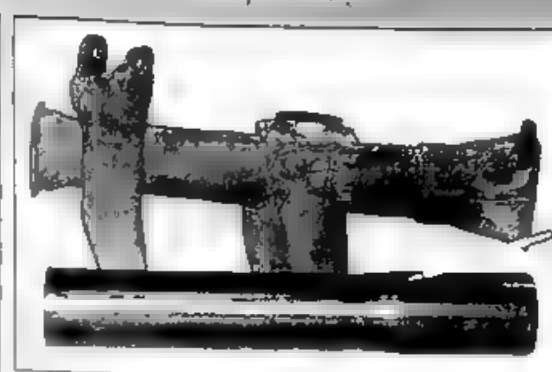
In this photo it's easy to tell which 9-inch housing comes from a full-size car and which from a Mustang. The housing on the left was under a big car, while the one on the right with the small axle tubes was a Mustang unit.

BONEYARD BASICS

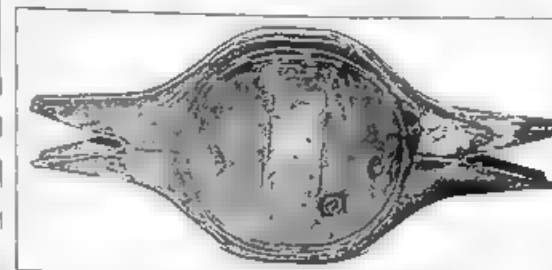
If you're scrounging a 9-inch rear end from a salvage yard, it helps to know which FoMoCo cars had it, so we've provided the list below. Also, note the caption that indicates the difference between the similar-looking 8- and 9-inch rear ends. Remember, the 9-inch axles were used throughout the model line, so this means checking under all body styles, including station wagons.

9-INCH REAR ENDS	
Year	Car line
57-79	Full-size Ford, Mercury
65-73	Mustang, Cougar
66-79	Fairlane, Torino, LTD II, Montego
58-76	Thunderbird
75-78	Granada, Monarch
80	Ford LTD, Mercury Marquis
78-90	Lincoln Versailles

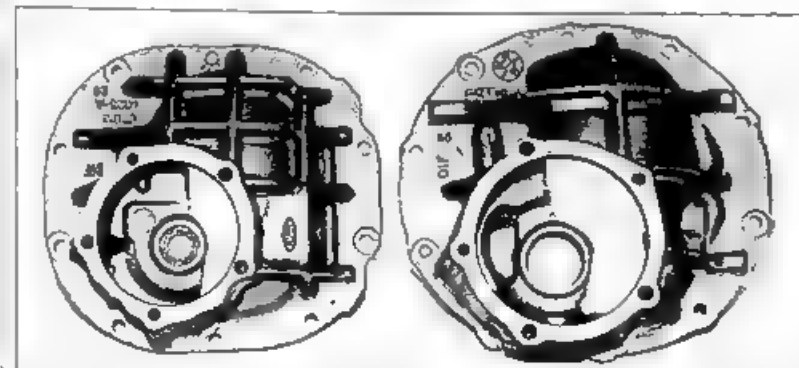
SOURCE:
Currie Enterprises
Dept. KC07
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Anaheim, CA 92807
714/528-6957



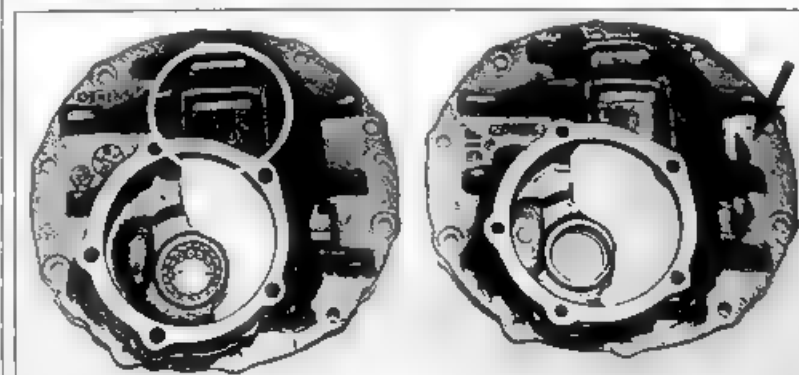
When the 9-inch axle was installed with a coil-spring suspension, Ford used a special axle tube with a flat spot on it. Currie Enterprises uses its own specially made seamless tubes for maximum strength. They taper from a 3.25-inch diameter to a 3.0-inch tube that fits almost all applications.



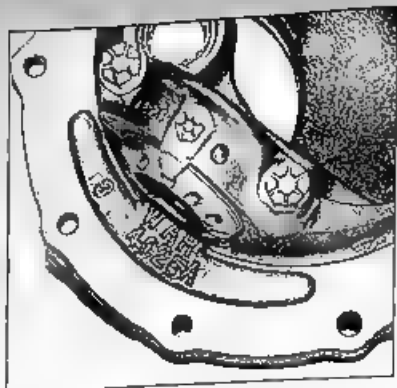
To further increase the strength of the 9-inch, Currie adds a V-mouth to the housing, doubling the amount of welding contact surface and thus increasing the housing and tube strength.



On these center sections or pumpkins, note the difference between a 9.375-inch Ford center section (right) and that of a regular 9-inch. As you can see, the 9.375-inch case is more massive all the way around than the 9-inch, and has a much larger rear pinion bearing-support housing. Unfortunately these 9.375-inch rear ends came mainly in early- and late-'60s Lincolns and there are no readily available performance or replacement parts for upgrading them.



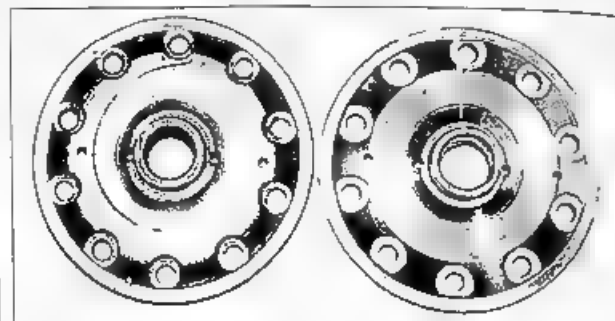
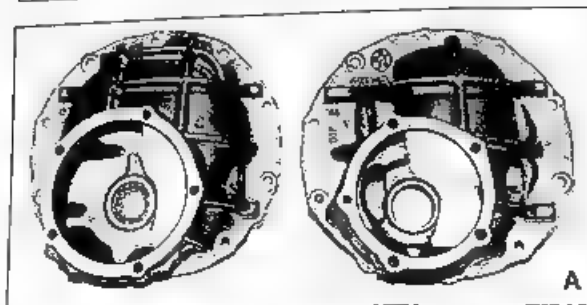
These two 9-inch cases look much the same, but oh, the subtle differences! First, look between the rib ends on the right side. The case on the left has a flat area, while the case on the right has a couple of dimples (see arrow) that signify a weaker pumpkin with less material. Also note that in the rear pinion bearing-support area (left case) there's more material. The cast-in "N" on the exterior stands for nodular, which means it's a stronger type of cast iron.



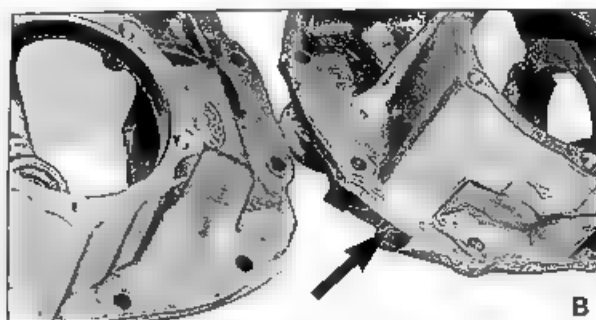
Bad news—if you take your 9-inch rearend apart and see the letters WAR cast on the inside of the case such as on this one, scrap it. Ray Currie says that this is the weakest of the weak when it comes to 9-inch pumpkins.



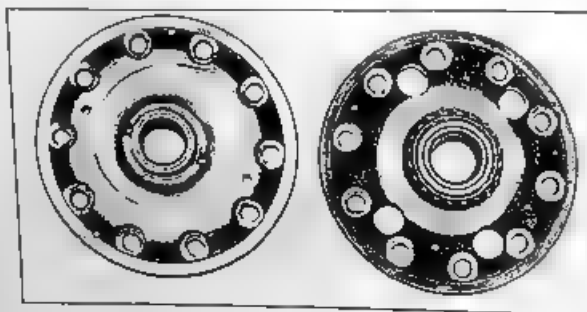
When with the the fig. will use (see ar. This is caused by an excessive clutch-spring load and not enough material to handle it.



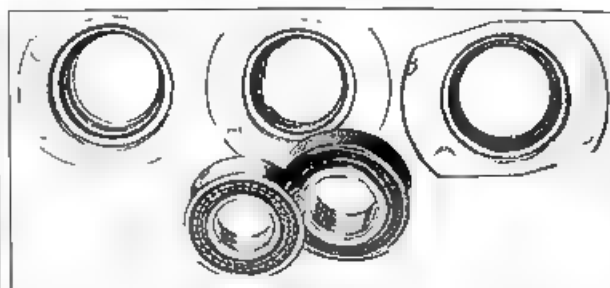
For the money, the factory case-half on the left is the best choice for most kit car applications. If you want the toughest assembly available, the billet-steel Posi case-half on the right is the only way to go.



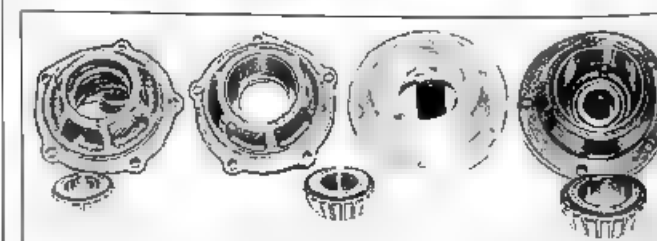
A substantial physical difference exists between the Ford 8- and 9-inch rearend housings (photo A, left and right). Look at them as shown and you can see the differences between the front bearing supports and the overall size of the pumpkin themselves. The easy way to tell them apart in the salvage yard or when the rearend is in the car is to see whether you can get a socket on the lower left nut on the pumpkin housing (see arrow on B). If a socket and extension fit right on, then you have an 8-inch rearend. If there's room only to get an end wrench on the nut, you've got a 9-incher.



Ford manufactured two basic types of Posi units, as shown. The unit half on the left is the one you want for serious power applications. Note that it doesn't have any lightening holes, whereas the unit on the right has four, reducing its strength and durability.



The type of power you're making should determine what type of axle-bearing end is welded to your Currie 9-inch rearend. Two factory axle-bearing housing ends are available; one is a small-diameter end (left and middle) and the other is what is referred to as the big-bearing end (right) corresponding to the larger bearing (foreground). Currie also offers a billet bearing-housing end and a heavy-duty bearing for performance applications.



A variety of front-pinion bearing supports is available. On the left is the standard cast-iron support with small bearing. Next is the factory Ford 9-inch high-nodular cast-iron Daytona support that is stout enough for most applications. The billet-aluminum support (center right) has the same bearing as a Daytona pinion support and is used in high-performance street applications. The support on the far right is a machined billet-aluminum piece that's the ultimate in strength, durability, and expense. It's aimed at drag racing applications, with no return-oil port for endurance-racing reliability.

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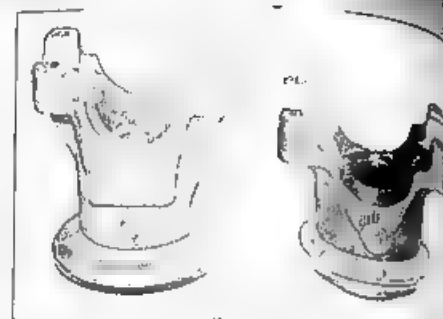
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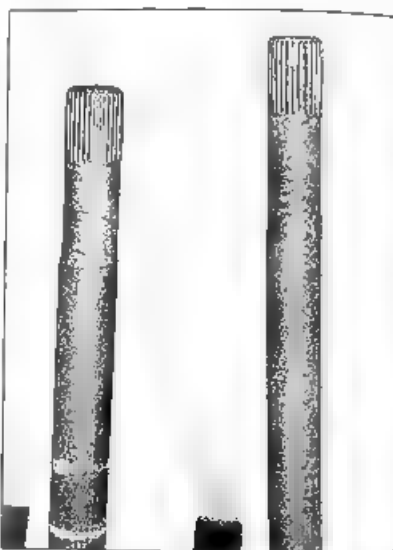


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A wide selection of pinion yokes is available for the Ford 9-inch, but Ray Currie says that these two are the most common. On the left is the 1310-series with a smaller U-joint, and on the right is the stouter 1330-series yoke with the bigger-diameter U-joint bearing.

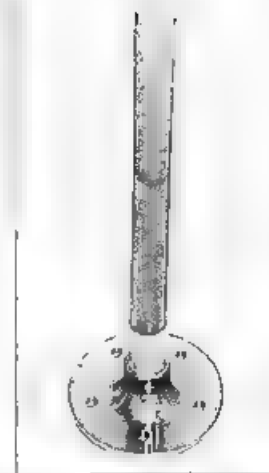


Ford 9-inch rear ends have two different axle-spline counts depending upon usage. The strongest is the 31-spline piece on the left and the weaker of the two is the 28-spline on the right. Both axles that have shafts like these can be shortened and unplined when the axle is narrowed for kit car applications.



More bad news—beware of an axle that has a pronounced taper like this, either in 28- or 31-spline, because it's the weakest of all Ford axles. Another important point with this axle is that it shouldn't be resplined or shortened.

For extra durability and strength, Currie can make you one of its forged and machined axles in any configuration from 28- to 35-spline and in any length.

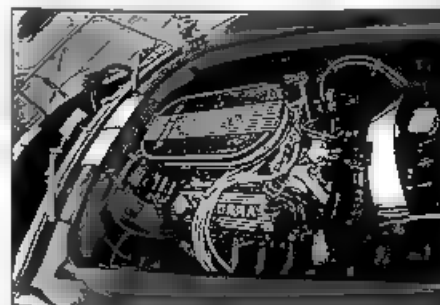


When measuring for width on a Ford 9-inch, the Currie brothers strongly recommend that you take dimensions from one wheel-mounting flange to the other wheel-mounting flange surface. This makes for a clearer dimension for building a custom-width 9-inch.



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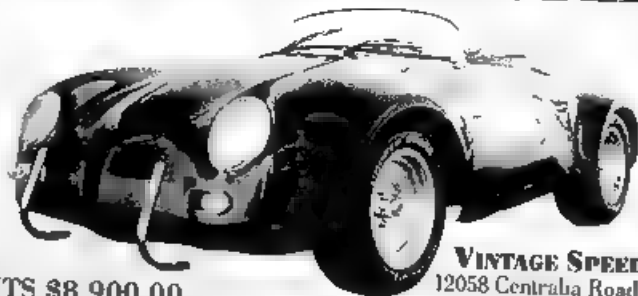
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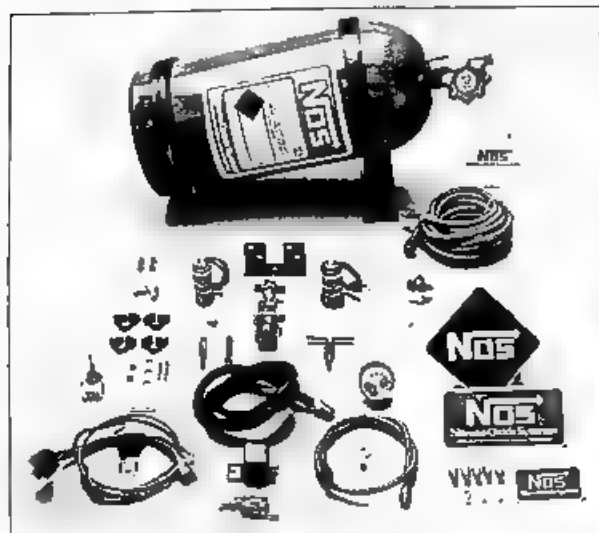
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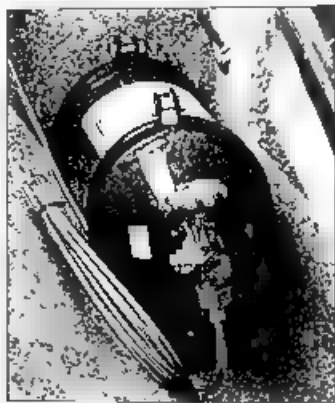
FORCE-FIELD FIERO

A LITTLE NITROUS OXIDE DOES WONDERS



These are the basic components of the NOS kit for the fuel-injected V6 Fiero. It's so complete that even a 1/8" NPT tap is supplied.

One of the simplest—and cheapest—ways to kick your Fiero rebody in the backside is with some nitrous oxide. According to Nitrous Oxide Systems (NOS), a stock V6 powered Fiero furnishes a quarter-mile time of 15.92 seconds at 83.6 mph, but pump up this Pontiac with a 60hp nitrous kit, and the time improves to 14.88 at 94.8 mph. That's a pretty hefty gain for a cost of only \$585 and less than three hours of installation time. Here's how Joe Palumbo and Joe Rea of the Aldino Car Company installed the NOS system in their Fiero kit:



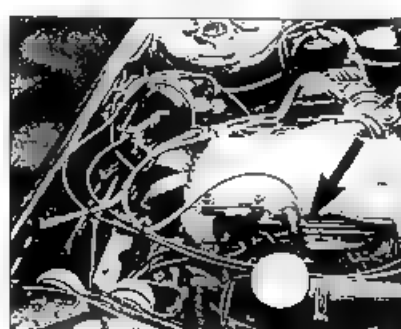
1 Determining the best location for the bottle is probably the most challenging aspect of the installation. For the Aldino kit, the passenger side of the rear trunk made the most sense, but there's enough line supplied for a frontal installation. Wherever you put it, make sure you don't drill holes into a critical component. Brackets supplied with the bottle tip it at the proper angle.



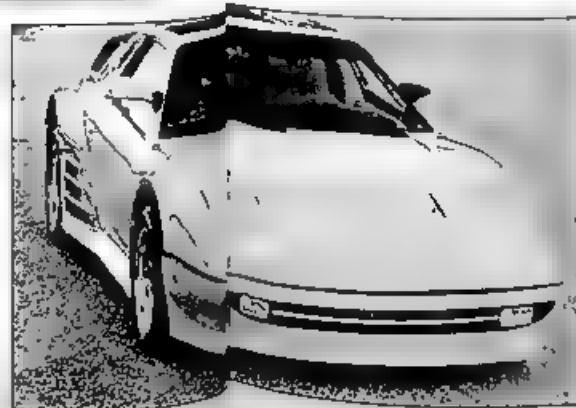
2 Drill a hole in the bulkhead and pass the feed line through to the engine bay.



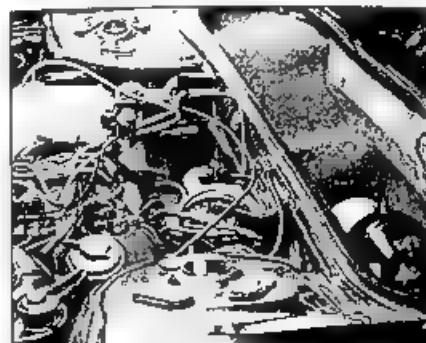
3 Positioning the microswitch at the throttle, so that it would actuate only at full throttle, proved to be a little difficult because the generic bracket supplied was not long enough. A wide, flat washer was used to trap the bracket and hold it in place. The bracket also had to be twisted so the microswitch was contacted at full throttle. The system works only at full throttle, in order to fool the computer.



4 The fuel feed line is connected to the fuel rail nipple. Don't forget to take out the Schrader valve before tightening the braided hose to the fuel rail nipple. Also, make sure you bleed the fuel pressure off at the pressure valve.



5 The actuation switch (arming toggle) was wired to the Electronic Control Module (ECM) rather than to the reverse light switch, as NOS recommends, because we felt there was less chance of accidental arming this way and because the connection was more positive. We found that the fittings tended to leak and used Loctite with Teflon tape to seal them. Also, when installing the fogger nozzle (note detail photo), keep out debris by plugging the throttle bore before drilling through the hose clamp, hose, and throttle housing.



6 Once the system is installed (we did it in 2 1/2 hours), dry-fire it to ensure that it functions correctly before you actually drive it. In particular, check for leaks, because they can result in engine damage. Don't fire the nitrous system when the engine is off—this may result in a lean-out backfire. And don't inhale the nitrous gas, either. NOS adds a small amount of sulfur dioxide to prevent substance abuse.

7 This Aldino Fiero kit is now ready to rock 'n' roll. KC

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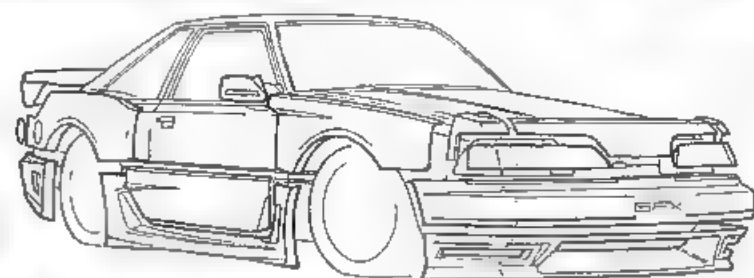
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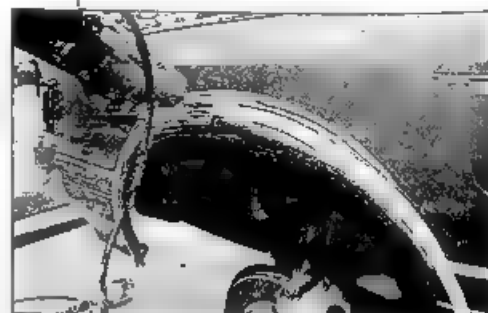
**PUT SOME
PANACHE
INTO YOUR PONYCAR**

LEAD PHOTO: STEVE TEMPLE



By Susan Ensen

wheels. Also remove the headlights, turn signals, and the front and rear bumper skins. The first step, modifying the wheelwells, begins with holding the new overlays (see line drawing) up against the car and measuring the difference. Mark the area with a grease pencil. After taping off the new area with masking tape, you're ready to start cutting.



1 Use a saber saw to trim the front wheelwells to the new fender's specifications.

Specialty car building covers many levels of skill, with a wide spectrum of products ranging from the start-from-scratch kit to the ready-to-run automobile. For non-pros and weekend mechanics alike, Aeroform has just introduced a package to restyle late-model Mustangs. The whale-tail rear, ground-effects undertrays and streamlined overlays can give any '79 through '92 Mustang a whole new life. Aeroform's kit allows the car to be either radically or moderately modified depending on the amount of pieces chosen (the total package costs \$3344 as of this

writing). Whatever you decide on, the results of the new body pieces can be stunning!

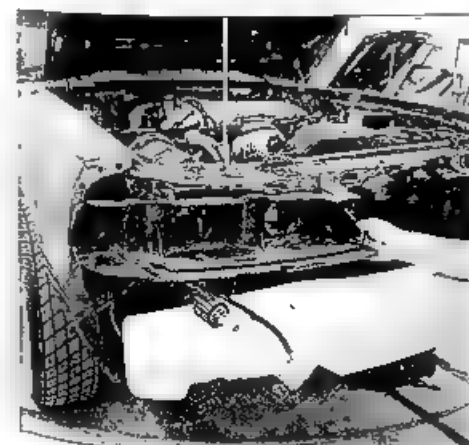
Feel free to call the folks at Aeroform, Inc. for any explanation of the steps outlined in the installation brochure provided with the kit. Some of the assembly manual is a bit confusing, but Aeroform can clear things up if you hit a snag.

Before beginning, place the car in an open, level space, allowing plenty of working room. Put the automobile on jackstands and remove the

2 The next step is to bend the edge under with a clamp.



3 Spray primer over the cuts to prevent rusting.



4 Install mounting brackets to the forward edge of the front fenders for the late-model Thunderbird headlight buckets.



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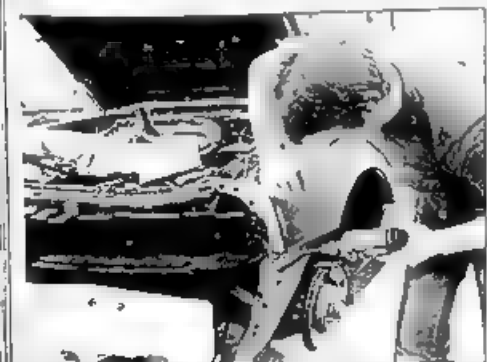
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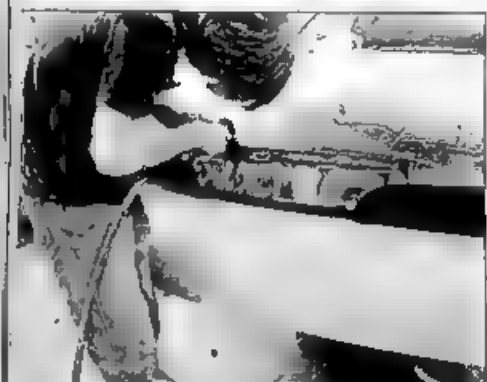
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5 Apply adhesive on the interior edges of the new fenders and front bumper, and attach them to the car. Fasten with screws as well.



6 Trim the hood so that it will clear the new headlights.



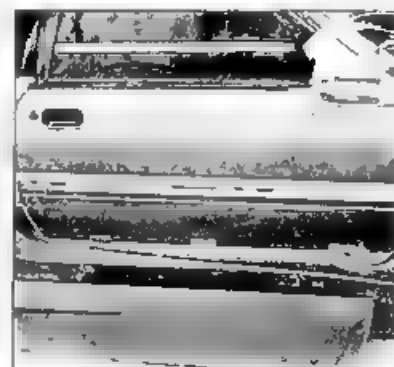
7 Cut back the outer skin for the new hood-trim piece.



8 Install the hood piece with adhesive. Test-fit the lights before filling in gaps between the new and original body panels.



9 Remove all side moldings and door-edge guards. Hold the side underlay against the car to measure new outlines on the side panels. Mark edges with grease pencil.



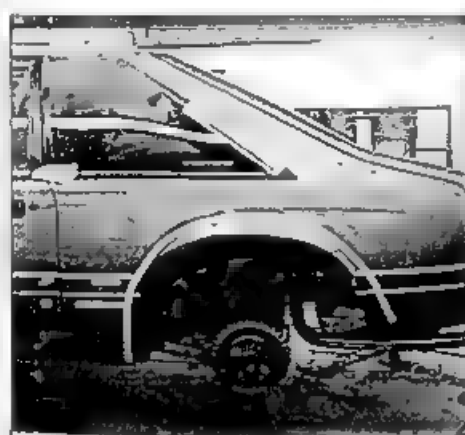
10 Attach the underlay with rivets and adhesive. Install metal brackets along the top edge of the underlay and secure the brackets with screws. Position screws in the upper portion of the bracket to avoid penetrating the inside of the door.



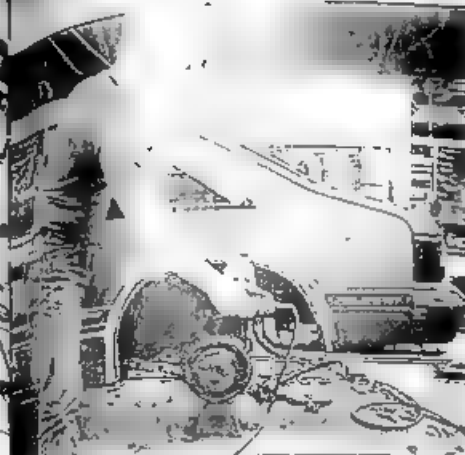
11 Apply adhesive to the car on the upper edge of the location for the door cap. Press the cap into place. With the door open, secure the door cap to the metal brackets with pop rivets and to the plastic block with adhesive. Use glue blocks to hold the parts in position while curing.



12 Ready the rear wheelwells for cutting using the same outlining procedure as on the front wheelwells.



13 Mark the overlay wheelwell with masking tape to clearly define the area to be cut.



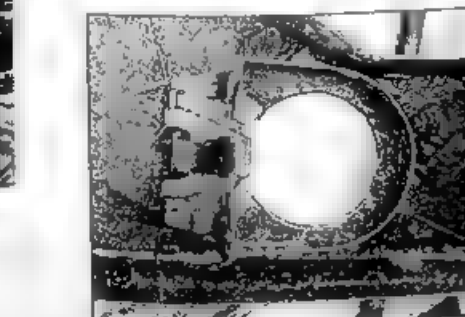
14 Cut the inner fender according to your markings.



15 Bend the inner fender to match the outer fender.



16 Weld the two edges together or fill with foam. Remove the gas-filler door and cut back the quarter panel.



17 Remove the fuel-fill door assembly and screw it into the new quarter panel.

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21 Installing the rear quarter panel on the left side is much easier without the hindrance of the fuel-fill assembly.

18 Position the door cap with paint sticks underneath and apply adhesive to the hinge plate

22 When attaching the left rear quarter panel, take care to line it up with the contours of the body.

19 Turn the gas-filler assembly over with the paint sticks in place, and wait for the adhesive to dry. The paint sticks should provide enough weight to balance the cap, ensuring a nice flush application

23 Ready the rear bumper for the kit by sanding and cleaning all contact surfaces. Apply adhesive between the rear quarter overlay and the upper bumper support.

20 When dry, attach the modified rear quarter panel (with the gas filler door) using two screws in the top, two in the bottom, and five screws in the wheel opening.

24 Place the bumper overlay in position and attach it with three screws in the rear edge (be careful not to overtighten).

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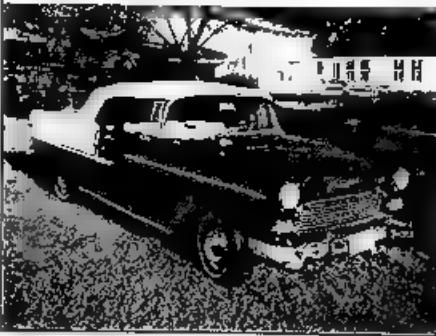
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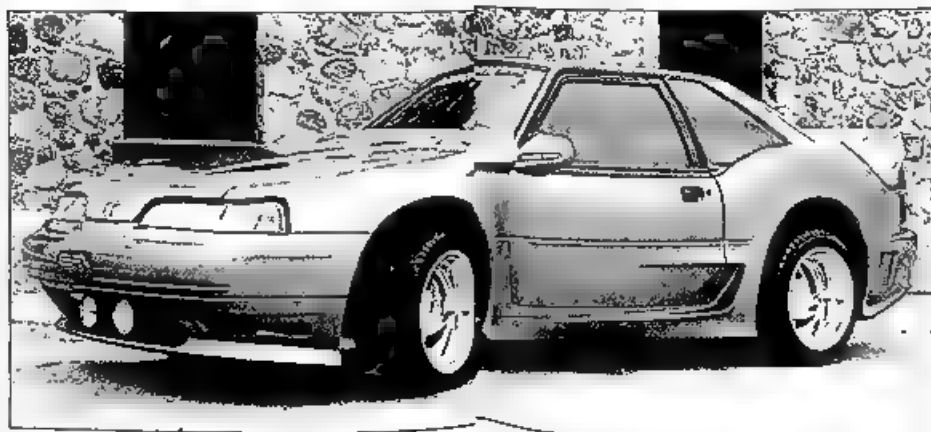
72 KIT CAR

25 Begin attachment of the rear spoiler by sanding and cleaning all contact surfaces. Apply adhesive to all contact surfaces of the spoiler and tape it into position

26 Raise the hatch and install four pop rivets through the lower edge of the spoiler into the rear hatch.



27 The spoiler, once installed, should be flush with the rear quarter panels. Take care when positioning it to get a smooth fit. After you fill in any gaps, prime and paint.



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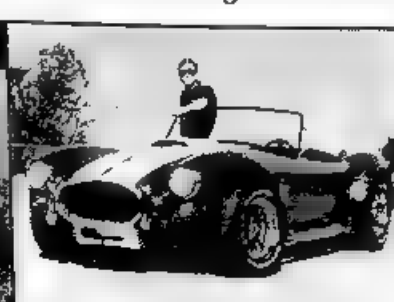
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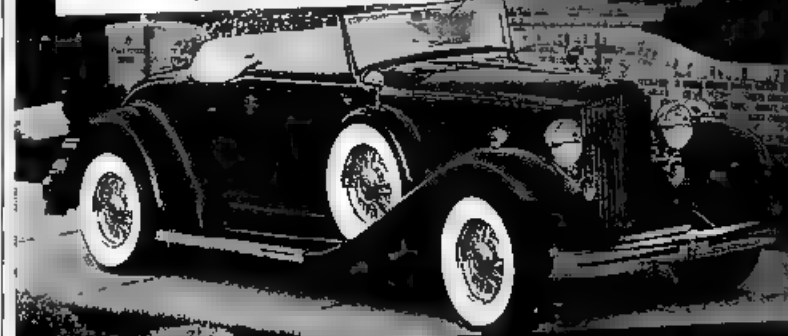
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**SETTING
UP YOUR
CAR'S
REAR END
DOESN'T
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BE A
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By Herb Adams

When choosing a rear suspension for your specialty car, your first consideration is whether to use an independent system or a live axle. Since there is a variety of designs for each type, it's not an easy choice. Moreover, independent rear suspensions and live-axle rear suspensions each have advantages and disadvantages.

74 KIT CAR

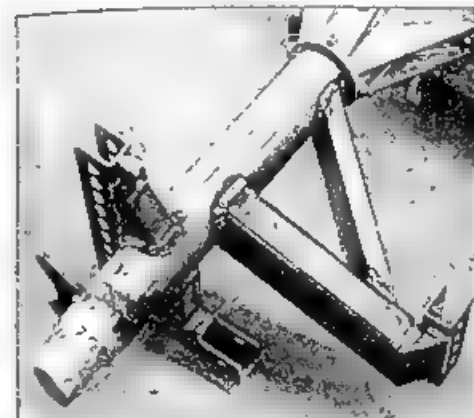
Before we cover them, though, we need to get some basic definitions out of the way. On an independent rear suspension, the rear wheels are not connected to each other. On a rear-wheel-drive car this means that the differential is mounted solidly to the chassis, with some type of driveshaft going to each wheel. On a front-wheel-drive car there is no rear differential, so driveshafts are

not used for the rear wheels.

A live-axle rear suspension has both rear wheels mounted on a rigid axle. Since the whole axle moves as a unit, and since it moves whenever either wheel hits a bump, it is called a live axle. Live rear axles are used on both front-wheel-drive cars and rear-wheel-drive cars. Obviously a differential is needed on a rear-wheel-drive car.

PRC 10 (the virtues and
vice each. The main advantage
an independent rear suspension
is that it may provide a smoother ride, especially over rough pavement. Note however that this trait is not automatic, as demonstrated on the '84 Corvette. It used a very stiff rear spring and therefore had poor ride characteristics despite its independent rear suspension. Most of the IRS smoother ride (and potentially better road holding) advantages come from having the differential mounted to the chassis. This reduction in unsprung weight allows each rear wheel to follow a rough road surface better because the differential does not have to bounce with the wheels. If a wheel can follow the road more of the time, it will maintain its traction more of the time and thus will increase its road-holding capability. The other advantage of an IRS is that it typically takes up less room in the car.

The main disadvantage of an IRS is that it is more complex so it usually costs more. Also, because of the com-



On this rigid Panhard-bar bracket that's welded to the rear-axle housing, note the holes that allow adjustment of the rear roll-center height.



With a Watts linkage mounted on the pinion snout of a differential, ends of the links mount to chassis brackets. Since the linkage pivots around the pinion, this is the roll-center height.

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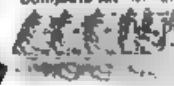
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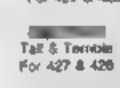
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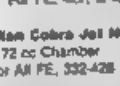
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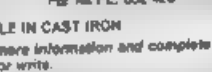


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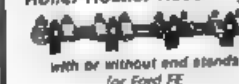


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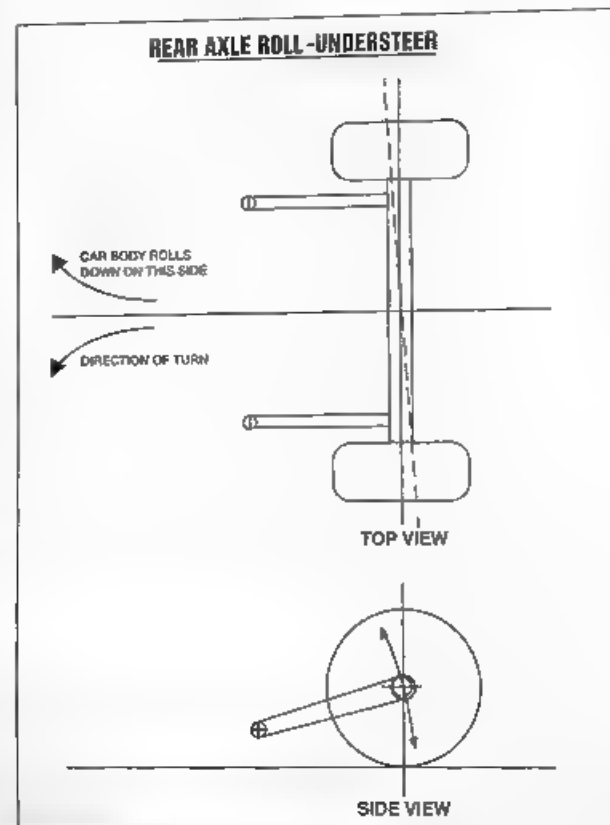
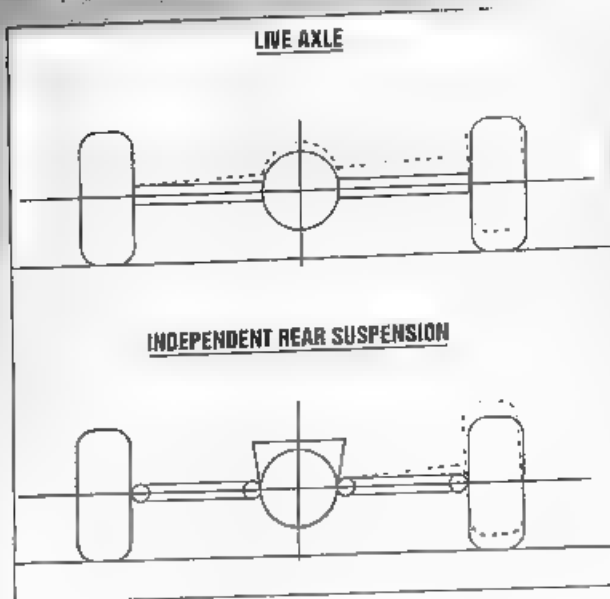
plexity it is more difficult to achieve a correctly designed suspension system. On production cars like the Corvette, designers simplified the system in order to save money. This effort often results in a compromised design that does not provide optimum geometry or deflection characteristics. (For details on the Jaguar IRS, see "The Struggle for Independents" May '92.)

In contrast, a live axle features simplicity and rigidity, translating into less money and an easier installation. The other advantage of a live-axle suspension is its extended history: more is known about how to make it work correctly. A well-designed and properly located live axle will beat a poorly designed independent, even on rough roads. On smooth roads it is difficult to see any advantage for an IRS. For instance, during the '80s the SCCA allowed its Trans-Am cars to run either a live axle or an IRS. They raced primarily on smooth tracks, and there was no apparent performance advantage for the IRS cars.

The major disadvantage of a live axle is, as already mentioned, its inability to allow each rear wheel to follow the contours of a rough road. Most of this inability comes from the unsprung weight of the differential. Some cars use a DeDion rear suspension, with U-jointed drive axles allowing the differential to be mounted on the chassis, to solve this problem. This system is even more complex than a regular IRS so it is not widely used. Although a live-axle rear suspension might not be the best textbook solution, it can be made to work very well on smooth roads and, because it is so well developed, you can make a satisfactory installation without too much trouble.

Before discussing the specific types of live axles, we need to define two terms that describe dynamic aspects of a rear suspension—roll-steer and antisquat. Understanding these engineering concepts is essential to properly setting up any type of rear end.

Roll-steer occurs when the rear axle steers the car as the body rolls in relation to the axle. Designers use roll-

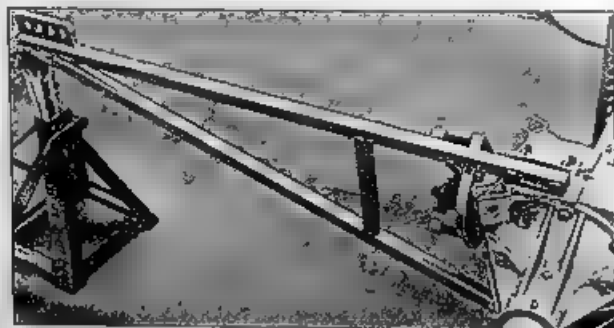


one of the main reasons for this is the fact that the rear axle is not a unit.

In theory, when one wheel of an IRS hits a bump only it must move. In actual practice, though, the spring loads also move the chassis with the differential attached, but to a lesser degree than with a live axle.

As the car body rolls during cornering, the outside rises and the inside is lowered. This points the rear axle in the direction of the turn, slightly offsetting the turn angle of the front wheels, which makes the car turn less. This is roll-understeer.

On the torque-arm type, it is rigidly mounted to the rear axle housing. The other end of the arm mounts to the chassis.



steer to affect the way a car responds to driver input in corners. It is generally preferred to have roll-understeer, which means the rear axle will steer the car toward the outside of the turn as the body rolls. Another way to understand this condition is to picture the outside rear tire gaining more toe-in as the body rolls going through the corner, keeping the rear axle from contributing to the turn angle of the front wheels (see illustration). Not all rear suspension designs have roll-understeer by

then other combination with the... the rear axle makes the back of the car drop down, which unweights the tires and reduces traction. A suspension with good antisquat characteristics prevents this by pushing the rear tires against the ground with extra force so they have better traction. This increased traction is proportional to the amount of acceleration, so it only acts as long as the acceleration is significant in magnitude. Since the rear tires have increased traction during this period, antisquat allows the driver to apply more power coming out of a corner, an advantage during high-performance driving.

TYPES OF LIVE-AXLE REAR SUSPENSIONS

Although there is a variety of ways to arrange the components of a live-axle rear suspension, most of them fall into one of three basic categories. A Hotchkiss Drive rear suspension uses a longitudinal leaf spring on each side of the car to locate the rear axle. These springs also support the rear vehicle weight, making it a very simple system. It has been around since the horse-and-buggy days, so it's well developed. In 1970 Chevrolet found that placing a shock ahead of and behind the axle would eliminate torque-induced wheel-hop under acceleration and braking. This fairly recent development has allowed the Hotchkiss Drive to stay current with other types of live axle rear suspensions.

For best results, the front of the springs should have more leaves than the rear. This configuration provides enough spring stiffness at the front to absorb the axle torque loads without increasing the spring rate. Some manufacturers are now using fiberglass leaf springs on their Hotchkiss Drive rear suspensions to reduce weight and to eliminate interleaf friction. None of these applications is on high-performance vehicles, so this aspect of its use is unknown. With the proper location of the leaf springs it is possible to achieve both adequate antisquat and satisfactory roll-understeer.

The design and materials used for leaf-spring bushings is an important consideration when selecting them for your application. For normal use, the stock-type rubber bushings are best. High-performance driving can be improved with a spherical bearing in the front spring eye. Under no circumstances should you use urethane bushings on the front spring eye, as they will bind up and not allow the body to roll in relation to the axle.

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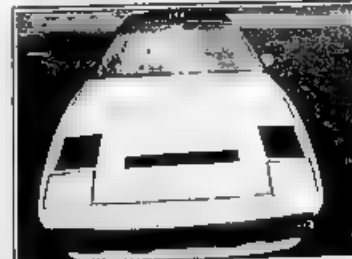
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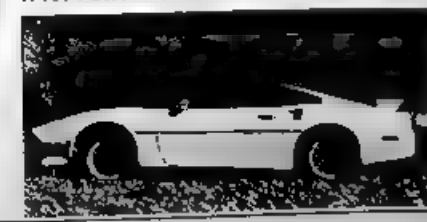
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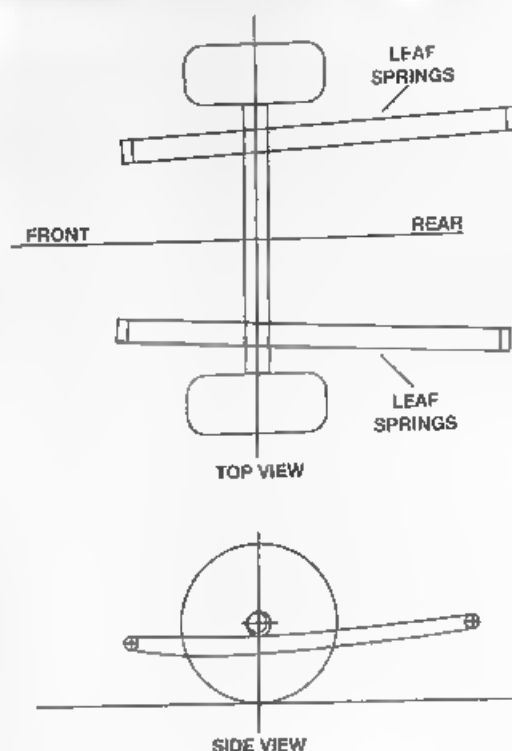


The major drawbacks of a Hotchkiss Drive rear suspension are its weight and the size of its leaf springs. Many cars don't have room to position the springs properly, and this limits their application in favor of other configurations.

A torque-arm rear suspension uses a long arm to absorb the rear-axle torque reactions. Other suspension members are needed to locate the rear axle laterally and longitudinally as well as to provide the springing medium. Torque-arm rear suspensions were used on Fords in the '30s and '40s, on Chevy trucks in the '50s and '60s, and most recently on Chevrolet Vegas and Camaros. This type can be packaged efficiently, and when correctly designed, it can be tuned to provide excellent overall performance. The interaction of the torque arm, the rear suspension, and the chassis is more complex than it seems, so it is sometimes difficult to get optimum performance without development work. Many short-track race cars use some form of torque-arm rear suspension, so it can be made to work. However, for a one-time builder it might not be the best choice unless you like to experiment with different setups.

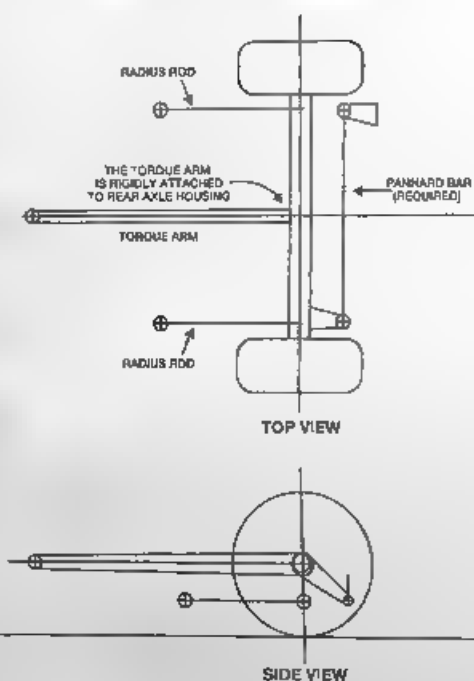
With a link-type rear suspension the

HOTCHKISS DRIVE REAR SUSPENSION



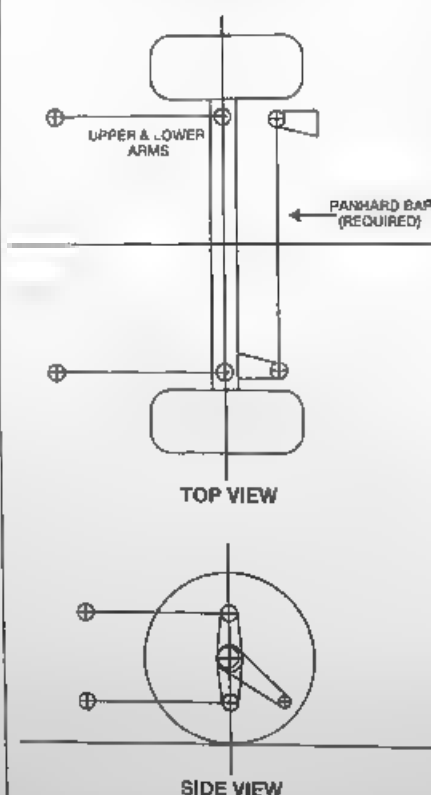
ing
ss inb.
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length of
of
spring and the
height of the
front spring eye
determines the
amount of anti-
squat. Roll-under-
steer is present if
the height is not
too great.

TORQUE ARM REAR SUSPENSION



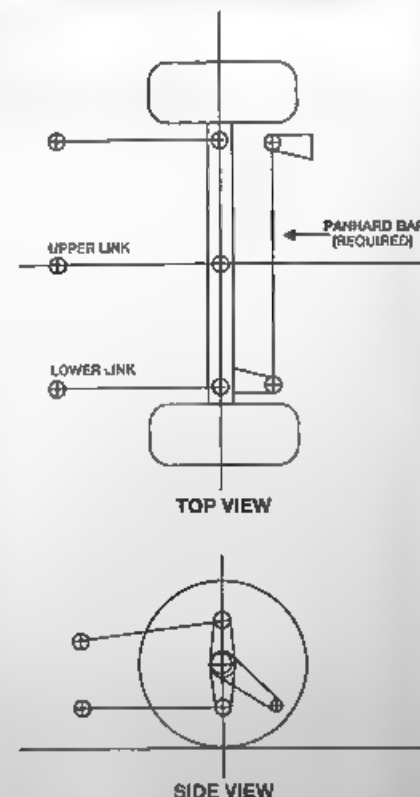
The torque arm is rigidly attached to the rear-axle housing (see top view). Radius rods can also be located at the centerline of the axle (see side view). The higher they are, the more antisquat results.

4-LINK REAR SUSPENSION



On a four link it's difficult to get much anti-squat, and almost impossible to get antisquat with roll-understeer. Note from the side view that the arms should be parallel.

3-LINK REAR SUSPENSION



live axle is located both longitudinally and laterally with link-type members. The arrangement of these links determines their characteristics, offering a multitude of possibilities. Most link-type rear suspensions fall into one of three categories: four-link, three-link, and angled arms.

A four-link-type rear suspension uses four longitudinal links to locate the axle fore-and-aft and to control the axle-torque loads due to acceleration and braking. Lateral location of the rear axle is controlled by the use of a Panhard rod, a Watts linkage, or a similar device. Four-link systems work best when the links can be long and when a minimum of antisquat is required. It is also difficult to get roll-understeer with an antisquat geometry. In order to allow the body to roll in relation to the rear axle, the links on each side of the car must remain parallel with each other. This severely limits the geometric variations possible, so we recommend considering the other link types of link rear suspensions.

With the three-link system it is easier to get the optimum roll-steer and anti-squat characteristics without restricting the roll angle between the axle and the car. Many short-track race cars use a three-link rear suspension because the system works well for performance

applications. The system can be made adjustable so you can experiment with different setups if desired.

The main disadvantage with both the three-link and four-link is the need for a Panhard rod or a Watts linkage to control the lateral location of the axle. A Panhard bar is simpler and therefore more common, but the bracketing needed to rigidly mount it to the axle and to the chassis is heavy and takes up space.

The need for these extra links can be eliminated by angling two of the links on a four-link system. This is a very simple solution to the problem, and if these links are arranged correctly, it is possible to get both good roll-steer and good anti-squat characteristics. The best arrangement of the angled arms-type is called a Satchell-link rear suspension. This configuration places the angled arms below the axle with their front pivots pointing toward the center of the car. The advantages of this arrangement are a low

Some amount of antisquat together with roll-understeer is possible in various combinations.

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roll center, good antisquat, good support of the axle housing ends and little need for extra frame bracing. The system is also compact so it can fit many types of cars.

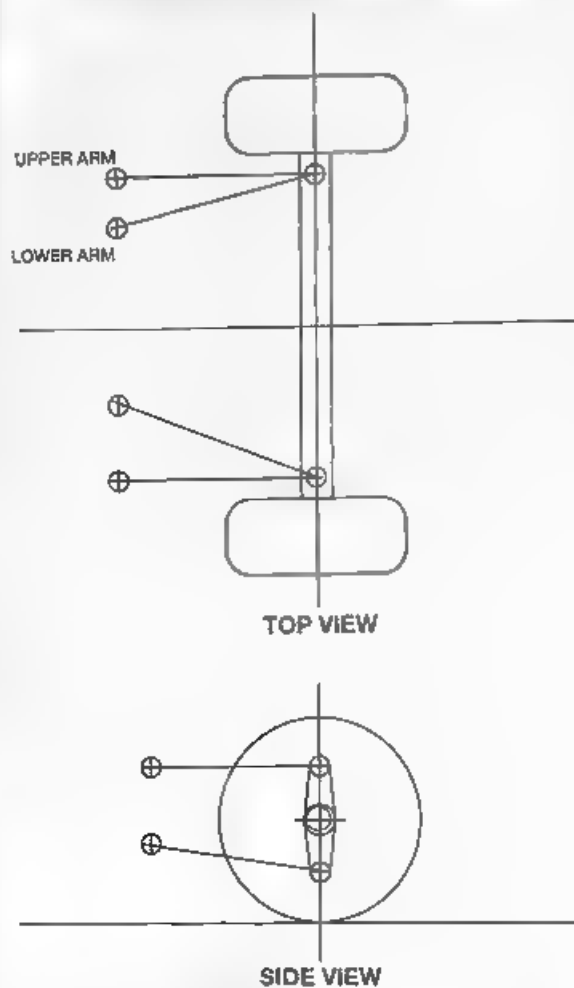
Finally, a few things should be mentioned about springs and shocks. They are part of a rear suspension to the extent that they provide the means of controlling the vertical distance between the axle and the car, and the means of dampening the vibrations induced. Each design of rear suspension has its own spring and shock requirements so we can't give specific recommendations. In general, the rear-wheel rates should be about 100 lbs/in for a light car like a Cobra, and about 150 lbs/in for heavier cars like a Camaro-based neoclassic. Springs and shocks cannot be used to correct a car that has poor geometry or too much deflection.

In summary, the kit builder is not limited to any single type of live axle. Which one you choose need not be determined solely by the specific application, but by cost and availability as well. Moreover, if you set it up right, a live axle can be an even match for an independent rear suspension. **KC**

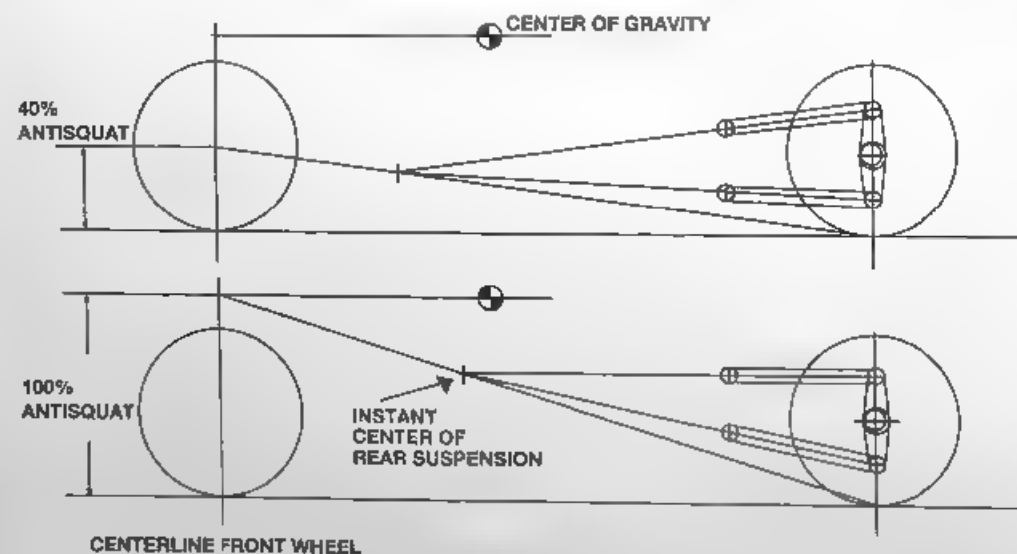
Herb Adams runs V.S.E. (Very Special Equipment), an automotive engineering consulting firm for design and prototype work. Herb Adams V.S.E., Dept. KC07, 23865 Fairfield Pl., Carmel, CA 93923.

HOW TO FACTOR

SATCHELL-LINK REAR SUSPENSION



DETERMINING AMOUNT OF ANTISQUAT



To increase antisquat, the instant-center point of the rear suspension must be raised and/or moved back.

The lack of anti-harshness simplifies frame bracing. The axle end saves weight. Also, a good range of anti-squat geometries is possible with roll-understeer.

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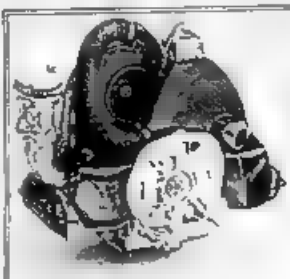
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BUG BOOSTER

HOW TO MODIFY A VW BUS ENGINE FOR A BEETLE-BASED KIT

(Editor's note. Joe Lociero, owner of Oregon Performance Products, sent us the following information about how he modifies a Volkswagen Type IV engine so that it fits in a kit that normally uses a VW Beetle engine and chassis.)

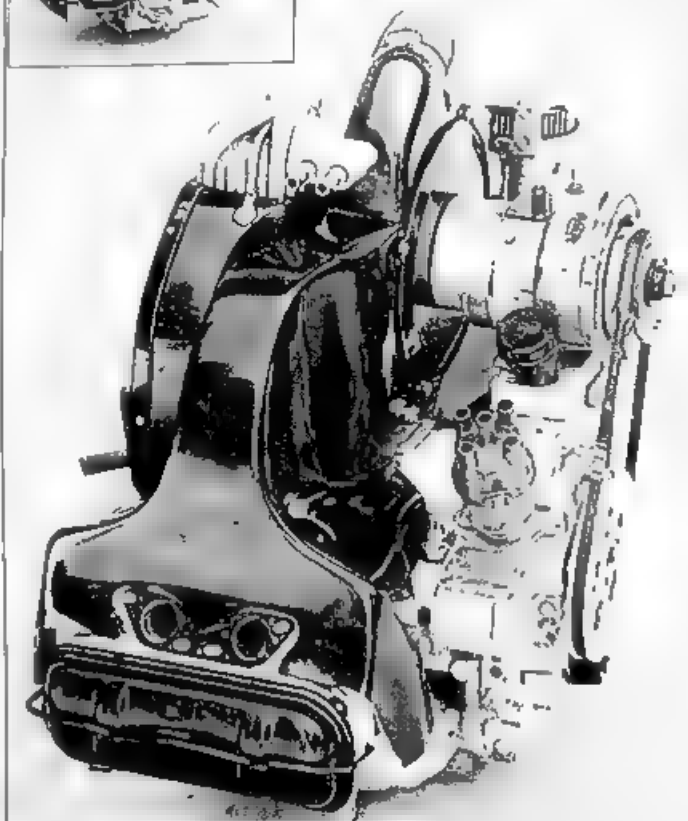


Instead of trying to squeeze extra power out of a stock VW Beetle engine, one alternative for VW-based kits is to use the larger displacement (1.7- to 2.0-liter) Type IV bus engine. In the past, one obstacle to this installation was the extra length of the block, but a DTM conversion kit overcomes this problem by using an upright fan shroud and a 1600 VW (Type I) engine fan.

Before going into detail, though, we should provide some background information. Some readers may recall that in addition to the vans, the Type IV engine was also installed in the VW 411 and 412 and Porsche 914 and 912. Drawbacks of the Type IV were its cooling design and its tendency to leak oil. The cooling design with the air fan on the end of the crankshaft makes the engine almost two feet long. That may seem short, but it's 10 inches longer than a 1600 VW engine.

The leaking problem of the Type IV is unforgivable, caused by the pushrod tube seals. The pushrod tubes are a dead ringer of the infamous Corvair tubes—also leakers. The design flaw can be overcome by using an O-ring material called Viton.

Otherwise, the Type IV engine does



The fiberglass shroud modification overcomes the inherent cooling problem of VW's air-cooled engines by directing an air path between the cylinders.

have many design advantages. Compared to the 1600, the Type IV block is aluminum without magnesium—a little heavier but stronger. It has a superior oiling system with a full-flow filter, larger main bearings and a modern spin-off oil filter. This type of oiling system permits the use of hydraulic lifters.

So here you have an engine with almost 40 percent more horsepower and torque (typically rated at 75 to 80 hp and 100 lb-ft) that can bolt up to a

VW transmission and doesn't need frequent valve adjustment. With its larger displacement, the engine is unstressed compared to a built-up 1600 model with the same displacement. Note too, that larger pistons and crankshafts are available for the Type IV to increase the displacement past 3.0 liters (2.5 liters has proven to provide a reliable output of 130 to 150 hp). The only problem is the Type IV is too long!

One inexpensive solution (compared with using a 911's shroud) is to use the original Bug air fan, adding a shroud that makes the most use of the cooling air. The original Bug shroud is flat, and the Bug engine (like the Type IV) is offset, with the cylinders on the left bank located ahead of the cylinders on the right. As a result, the airflow is weak over number three cylinder, which causes the valves to burn out. At least 75 percent of Bug motor failures are because of this problem.

In the original design, the engine was only 25 hp, so cooling did not present any problems. As its power went up to 36 hp, then 40, 53, and 58 (Dual Port 1600), places with hot climates like Yuma, Arizona, saw Beetles drop like flies. The factory responded by retarding number three spark at the distributor, moving the oil cooler out of the shroud for more airflow, and adding more louvers to the engine cover—all this was done so that number three and four cylinders could get more air.

The DTM shroud mentioned at the outset is designed to get around the problem of cylinder number three by sending an equal amount of air in the

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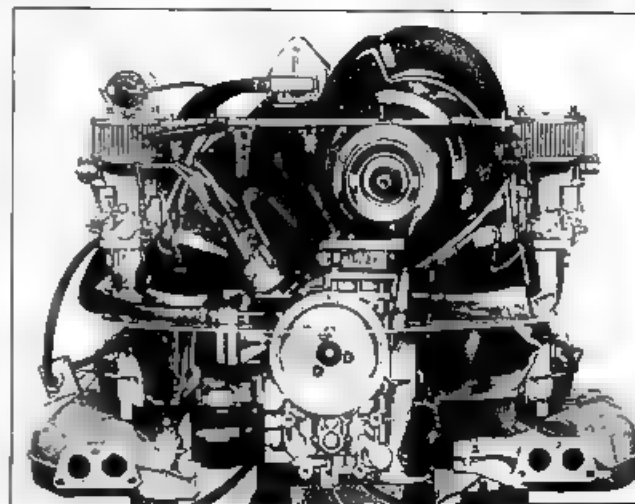
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The DTM kit provides all of the necessary hardware for converting a VW bus engine for use in a Beetle-based kit.



first place. The fiberglass shroud is offset, like the engine, so that the cooling air strikes evenly on both sides, thus the name DTM for "Down the Middle." The oil jacket in the rear of the shroud is forced-air cooled. This is a mimic of the normal late-model Bug system and eliminates remote oil coolers.

The Type IV with a DTM is a simple approach to updating an existing VW powerplant, or to building a more powerful VW-based kit car without getting into the engine. Simply strip off the

existing cooling tin, fuel injection, alternator, and blower fan; install the shroud, a new 009 Bosch distributor, a pair of dual Dellorto carbs, and a Bug alternator and fan. Everything mentioned is a simple bolt-on. The Dellorto carbs come with an instruction book, the DTM shroud includes an instruction sheet, the Bug alternator and fan are usually preassembled, and the distributor can go in only one way. So there you have it, all the makings to delight the kit car builder.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR TYPE IV DTM UPRIGHT SHROUD CONVERSION FOR AIR-COOLED 1700-2000CC VW ENGINE

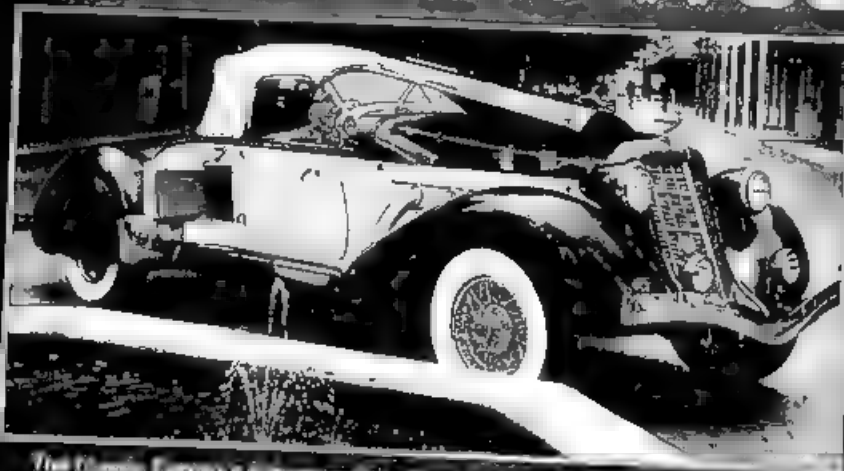
LENGTH	19.1 in.
WIDTH	17.1 in.
HEIGHT	16.9 in.
OUTPUT at 4000 RPM	1.8 L/RATIO
AIR DISTRIBUTION	1690 cfm
LEFT BANK	40%
RIGHT BANK	40%
OIL COOLER HOUSING	17%
AIR DIRECTION	Middle of cylinder bores, both left and right banks
OIL COOLER	Stock Type IV Volkswagen, seven plates, transporter/bus
MAX. CYLINDER SHIM SIZE	.250"/6.5mm per side
PRICE	\$495*

* includes shroud, alternator support casting, crankshaft pulley with belt, shroud brace, dipstick tube adaptor, two oil cooler adaptors, oil-cooler air housing, air hose, throttle-shaft adaptors, and related hardware

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Some Old Town



The classic Ferraris & Lotus models showed a classic American.



Fittingly, a Sky Station clone made an appearance and attracted some curious looks.

PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE TEMPLE, JIM YOUNG, AND GREGORY ANIELKY

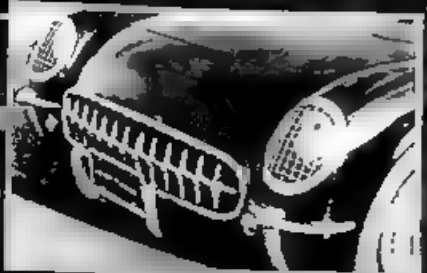
K... are pepping up their... there was the... Trusted Vehicle... event in... Cincinnati last summer, and then came Old Town Autofest in the fall. It crawled up alongside street rods and muscle cars. And now the SCVA has kicked off Winterbrake, also held at the Old Town... attraction in Kissimmee, Florida. How did kit car manufacturers fare there without the draw of other types of cars? Just fine.



Even the reputation of the Chevy wasn't handicapped by its looks.



Classic Roadsters showed how building old-style cars can be a new business.



A turbo V6-powered '83 Corvette blazed from Kit Car World took the checkered flag for the show.



Have it run up to 100 in less than 10 seconds at an 800-horsepower Chevy.



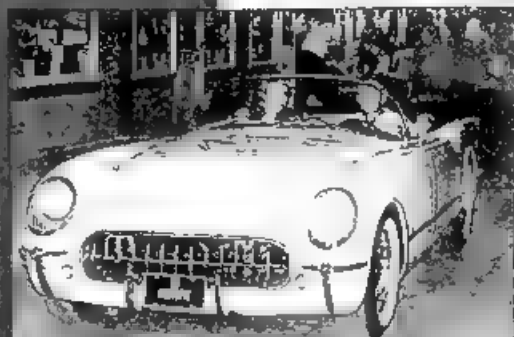
Protec's Fiero-based Ferrisa kept folks waiting in line for a closer look.

thank you. Granted, it was not as big an event as the two preceding shows, but in time and with a bit more advance notice, this setting could grow in popularity for kit car events. In the meantime, be sure to attend the SCVA's World Car Show this July at Indianapolis, Indiana (see the Seen/Heard department for details).

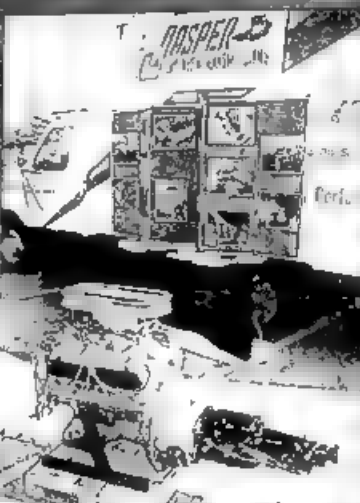


Unique Motorcars' dealer Bill Keller showed off his unique Cobra cargo trailer. The entire display won the Best Manufacturer award.

Classic International's replica of a 1935 Mercedes is still at the prototype stage, but should be available later this year.



Memory Meters: '33 Chevrons stirred some recollections.

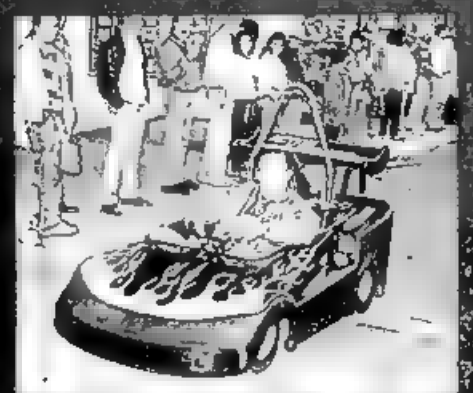


Just about everything you might need for a kit was on display.

Kit car folks sure know how to have fun.



Predator's Jaguar replicas jumped right out.



Good things come in small kits.



Precision's Gary White (left) gave away one of his Daytona-style kits.



The Renart rolled into Old Town all the way from England, and took Old Town's Best trophy.

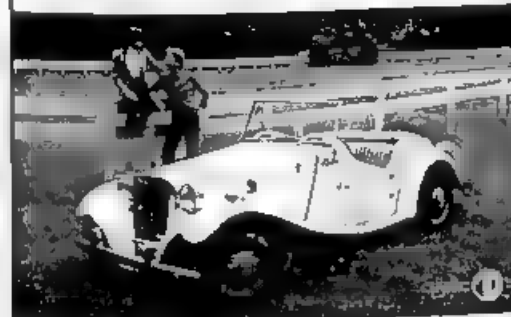
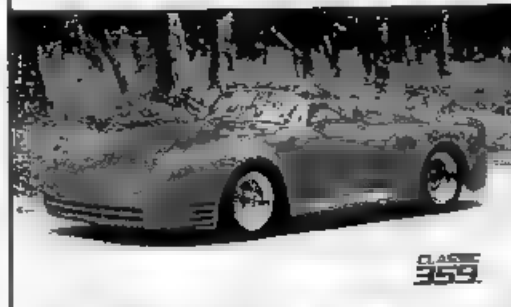
Warp Five's reintroduced Mustang (left) held its own against Dodge's Camaro reborn (right).



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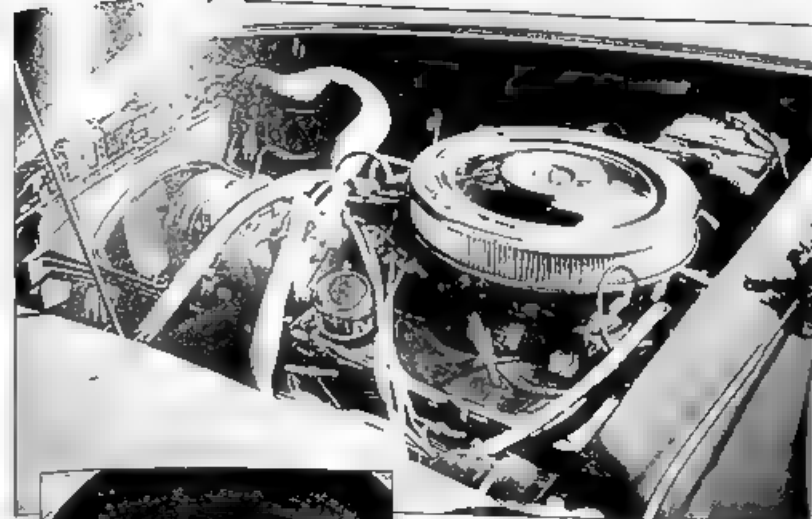


Marilyn Monroe was a siren of the silver screen. The Lone Ranger had silver bullets and his trusty steed, Silver. Matt Dillon wore a silver star. Dracula was struck by a silver cross. And Rolls Royce built the incomparable Silver Ghost. Legends all, and with one

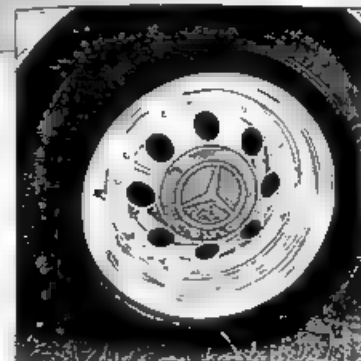
precious metal in common. Another type of silver figured prominently in the auto world of the mid- to late Fifties—the Mercedes-Benz Silver Arrow. Today, a replica of the Silver Arrow—albeit painted Ferrari-red in this particular example—is available from long-time specialty car manufacturer Gil Longnecker

through Classics International.

The original 300SLR was a calculated marketing effort. In the Fifties, Italian sports cars dominated the international racing scene, and Daimler-Benz reasoned that wins in international sports-cars events would give German products prestige on the world market. To



A small-block V8 fits easily in the engine bay



Both wire-basket and chromed wheels (pictured) are available.

these Mercedes so competitive. Apparently the specifications were closely guarded by the Unterturkheim plant in Stuttgart, even from the drivers. When finally allowed to see the car's specifications, Moss was quoted as saying, "Oh what a wonderful car. Thank God it's not for sale. I'd hate to have to run against it!" And this from a guy who drove it with such success.

Only five of the Mercedes-Benz 300SLR cars are in existence today, all resting in museums around the world. Through Classics International, however, the Silver Arrow dream is still attainable—and for a price much lower than those of the cars raced by Moss, Fangio, Khng, or Herrmann (if these museum pieces were ever to become available for sale).

When I first spied this car, I didn't recognize it as a replica of the famous racing car. All the photos I'd seen of Moss' car showed it to be a single-cockpit configuration with a single headrest and a low, wrap-around windshield. As you can see from the photos, the Classics International car has a full-width cockpit. However, the Classics 300SLR replica can be configured in several ways—as a twin-headrest roadster, a soft-top convertible, or a hardtop coupe. I personally prefer the car with its hardtop in place since it better resembles the 300SLR Coupe, and it recalls a little '56 190SL that I drove my first two years of college.

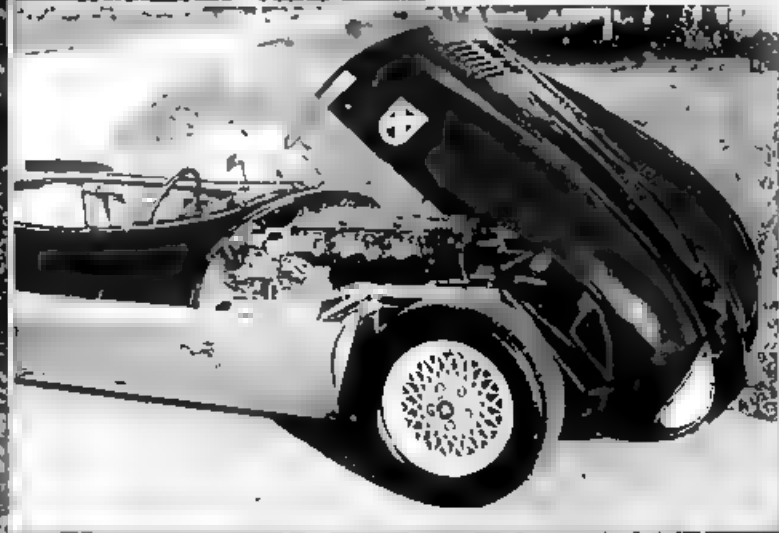
The Classics 300SLR is built on a custom spaceframe available from the factory in Florida (the marketing office is in Fargo, North Dakota). Classics recommends finding a V8 powered '74-'78 Mustang II donor

car for the drivetrain and suspension components, as well as for the shortened driveshaft, the radiator, and the steering column. In addition, you'll need some parts from a '63-'80 MGB convertible, including the windshield frame, roll-up side windows, top bows, and header. The chassis can accommodate either manual or automatic transmissions and even a Chevy V8 engine and transmission if desired.

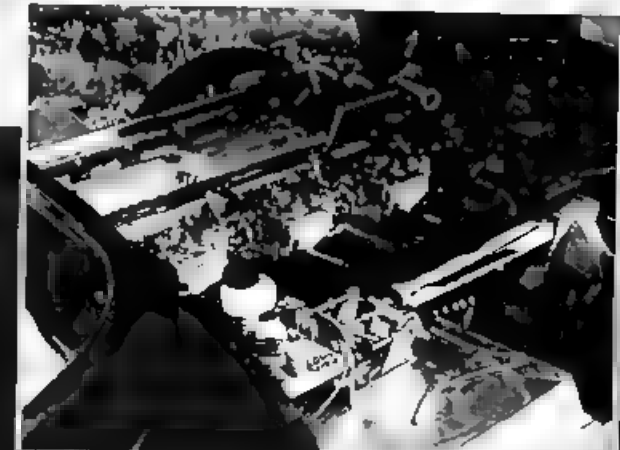
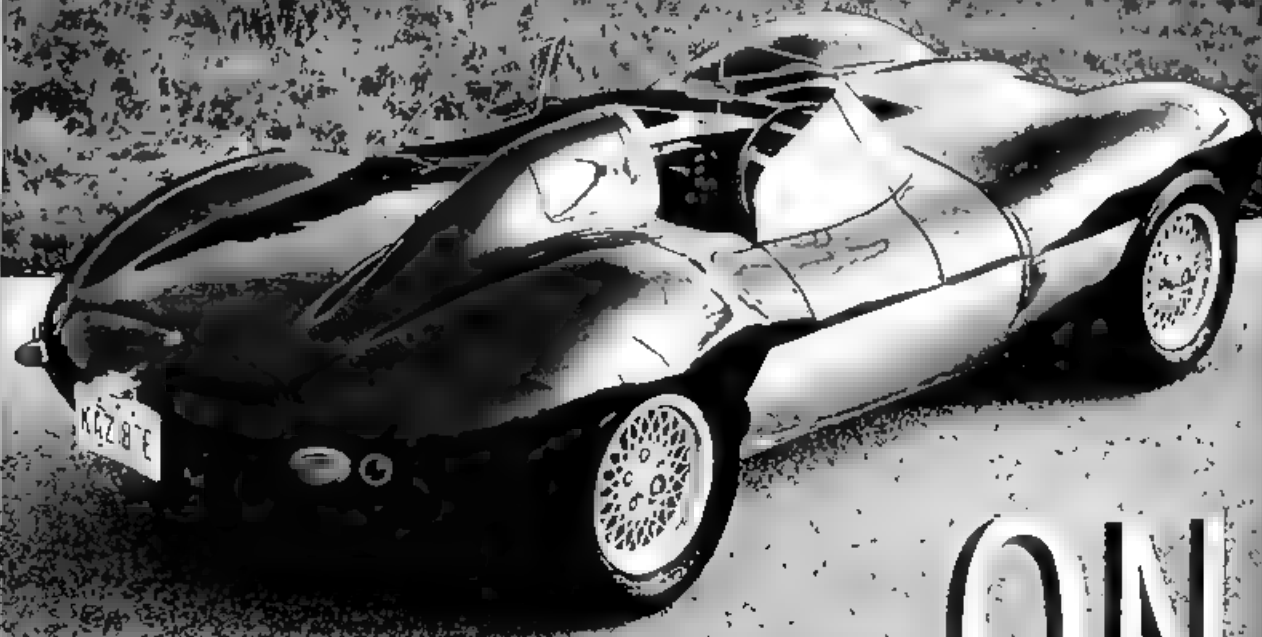
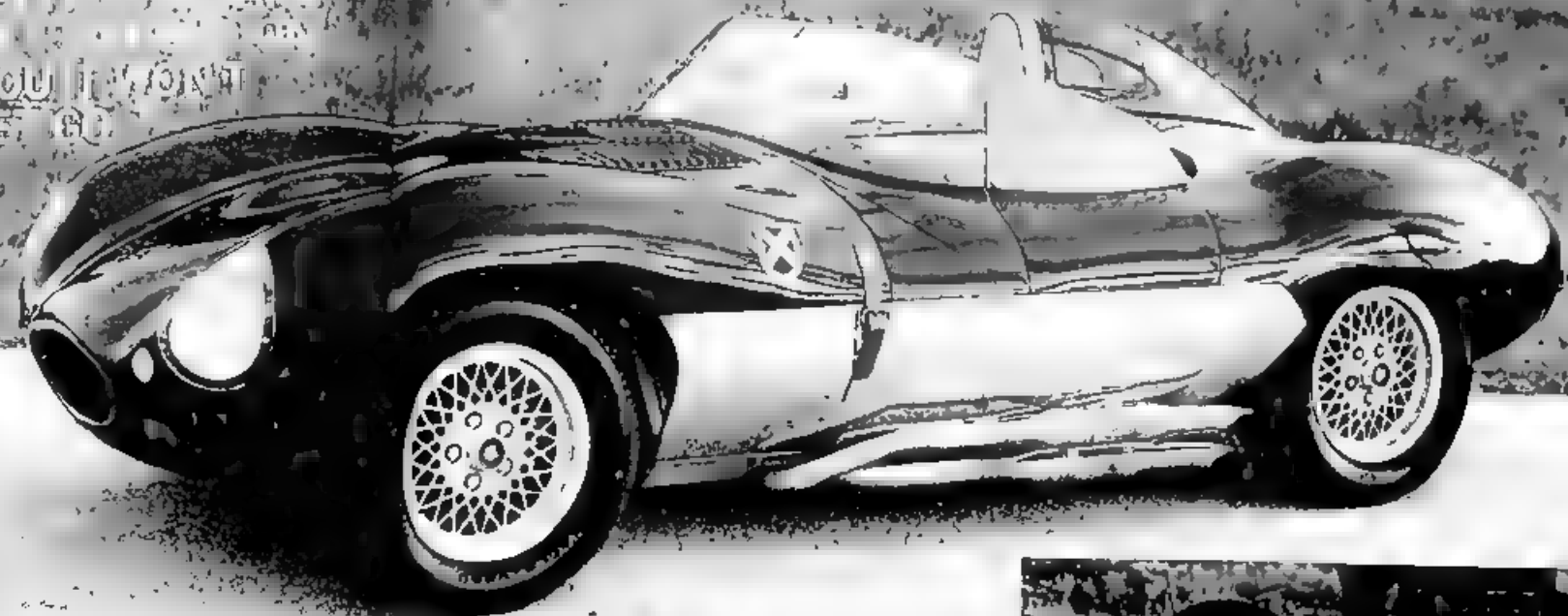
The basic 300SLR kit (\$14,990 as of this writing) includes a one-piece fiberglass body with an inner liner. Classics uses a multipiece mold to create the body, fabricated with a combination of hand- and machine-laid glass. Other fiberglass components include a pair of doors, hood, trunk, deck lid, wheelwell inner liners, inner front fenders, instrument panel, and firewall. The space frame comes complete with necessary mounting bracketry for the radiator, gas tank, door hinges, trunk hinges, and steering shaft extension. Rounding out the list of standard components are headlight and grille trim, seat covers, interior door panels, floor carpeting, trunk carpeting, kick panels, taillight lenses, headlight covers, windshield mounting bracket, steering shaft and bearing, turn-signal brackets, headlight brackets, and a complete assembly manual.

Classics International also offers several options kits to further outfit the car, along with some factory-assembly packages. Included in the special packages are a deluxe leather interior with hand-sewn pleated upholstery; convertible hardtop; chassis-handling kit with four-control-arm suspension, coil springs and swaybars, A/C and heating unit; instruments, wire basket wheels, and even a fastener package with nearly 100 nuts and bolts. Turn-key vehicles can be ordered as well.

The demo vehicle I checked out was obviously built with care—no surprise—because it is used occasionally as a show car. Powered by a 302-cid Ford from a '76 Mustang II donor car, the engine is fairly stock with just a bit of aftermarket chrome, an Edelbrock manifold with a Holley four-barrel carburetor, and custom headers from Classics. Suspension components are from the same car on the 94.5-inch wheelbase. The wheels are handsome chrome 14x6-inch modular units with oval cutouts and color-coordinated three-point-star center inserts, and are shod with 205R14



PRESTIGE
(DET)
(S)
YOU
1951



ture headrest/tail fin and sleek body styling. My old flame for the racing cars of '55-'57 was rekindled recently when I came across a pair of D-type replicas from Predator Performance of Largo, Florida. The firm has beautifully captured the grace and flair of those legendary

three-time Le Mans winners of the late Fifties. Jaguar produced only 87 of these cars between 1954-56, 71 XK-D racing models and 16 XK-SS street versions. Winning the 24 Hours of Le Mans was Jaguar's target in producing the D-type roadsters. In

1951 and 1953 the company won the venue with a sporty C-type roadster, followed by wins in 1955, '56, and '57 with the D-type model. The latter victories were particularly sweet considering that the Jags were powered by 3.8-liter sixes and competitors ranged from V8

ON THE PROWL

By Jim Youngs

Maseratis to V12 Ferraris.

Jaguar's accomplishment was actually made by "Ecurie Ecosse" (French for "Team Scotland"), a non-factory entry in 1956 and 1957. The '57 victory, in fact, prompted Gregor Grant to write in *Autosport*, "Jaguar has now won the endurance classic five times—in 1951, 1953, 1955, 1956, 1957!—equaling the Bentley achievements of 1924, 1927, 1928, 1929, and

1930, and bettering Alfa Romeo's record of four wins in 1931, 1932, 1933, and 1934. But there is a significant difference, namely, that Bentley and Alfa Romeo, revered names in the sports car world through the years, were also in the most expensive price class, whereas Jaguar is in a far less costly category, selling its cars in many thousands in today's highly competitive medium-price markets. This latest achievement in the world's greatest sports cars race will not go unnoticed in the world, nor will the fact that the superb six-cylinder twin-overhead camshaft engine of the competition D-type is basically the same as that in the ordinary 3½-litre Jaguar saloon....Brave, Ecurie Ecosse!"

Predator Performance has been in the Jaguar ground-effects and accessories business for about six years, but its owners, Daniel and Lawrence Ligan, each have 15 years experience in Jaguar restoration and other similar endeavors with the cat marque. They understand the magic of Jaguar, and to capitalize on some of that attraction, decided to dive headlong into the D-type building project less than a year ago. Judging by initial reaction, there is plenty of interest out there for the beauty and timeless charm of this aerodynamic (called streamlined in 1956) roadster.

To get a good feeling for Predator Performance's handiwork, we took a close look at Ted Brettner's brilliant Liberty blue XK-D. Attention to detail is one mark of care and quality, and this car is loaded with details.

The foundation of the Predator is a cold-rolled, seamless tubular racing space frame with triangulated cross members. The rearend on this

particular car is a fully independent, '75 Jag XJ6-suspended four Carrara coil-over shocks with stock Jag spindles and two-piston inboard brakes with non-vented rotors. The rear half shafts and lower fulcrum arms are narrowed by 3 inches on each side. The front end features custom uprights to which a pair of Carrara coil-over shocks and upper and lower A-arms are attached. Predator uses Dodge



The full-width windshield was used only on later D-type race cars.

Omni (TRW) rack-and-pinion steering components. Front brakes are four-piston caliper units with vented rotors. The XK-D model sports stock '90 Jaguar XJS aluminum mag wheels shod with Goodyear 225/60x15 Gatorbacks.

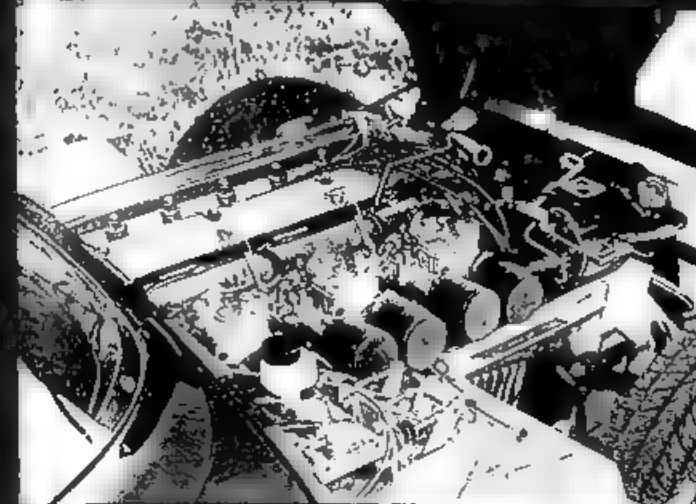
To power his car, Brettner chose a '63 3.8-liter, dual-overhead-cam,

polyester resins, five layers of 14-ounce mat, and one layer of 8-ounce cloth, all hand-laid. A fully welded tubular steel skeleton is 'glassed into the body for strength and then mated to the chassis with polyurethane bushings, effectively forming a steel cage around the cockpit. The clamshell hood has integral aluminum bulkheads for headlights and extra stiffener panels glassed in place. The hood also has hinges and aluminum levers installed at the factory.

To keep things as authentic as possible, Predator's body features a split cockpit and low, wide-sill doors. Like the later D-type racers of the '50s, it has a full-width windshield. The earlier race cars had just a wraparound screen on the driver's side and solid panel covering the passenger-side opening of the cockpit. The full-width windshield was a Le Mans mandate to slow cars down after the terrible Mercedes accident in 1955 that killed 30 spectators. Predator has maintained the distinctive

Jaguars will turn the heads of people who care nothing about cars....

six-cylinder engine from an XKE donor. This distinctive engine was fitted with a Predator Performance Weber intake manifold and a trio of 45 DCOE Weber carburetors. The early factory-prepped D-type was pushed by a twin-cam six that had grown to 3.8 liters for the 1957 Le Mans. That dry-sump lubed engine developed 300 bhp, propelling the little car to nearly 170 mph on the famed track's 3¼-mile-long Mulsanne Straight. Brettner's engine, however, is neither a Jag factory



A trio of Webers breathes life into the 3.8-liter dual-cam.

large-fin headrest and offers a removable unfinned unit as well.

The cockpit is cozy but roomy enough for the business at hand. The curvy body seems to envelope you as a preview of the sensuous experience you are about to enjoy. All controls are close at hand and gauges are easily visible on the aluminum dash panel. Predator uses Elan GT series Classic Instruments and a vintage-look Nardi three-spoke wood wheel. The replica seats were developed from the '57 road car, XK-SS, and covered in gray leather. To finish off the cockpit, fiberglass interior panels are skinned in .030 aluminum for an authentic look.

One touch of the starter button on the dash, and the vintage 3.8-liter Jag barks to life with a distinctively Jag exhaust note resounding from the twin free-flowing side pipes. Driving the D-type right-hander on American roads took a little concentration, but our early morning jaunt on fairly deserted roads helped. As you would imagine, the lightweight car had no trouble performing with power to spare. The non-synchromesh gate between First and Second took some concentrated timing, but it became natural as driving time increased. The body and chassis felt comfortably stiff, without any rattles or unnatural behavior. The Predator is aptly named; you will surely stalk the countryside for twisty roads and any prey who do not recognize the XK-D for its heritage of racetrack prowess.

With collectible D-types demanding prices in the seven-figure range (one just sold at auction for \$1,050,000), the Predator

seems an excellent value for those who want the look and performance experience. The base price for a body and frame kit is \$15,000, with turn-key cars beginning at \$45,000. Ted Brettner's sterling model (shown here) carried a price of about \$60k. The XK-SS edition is available as well. Predator Performance offers virtually everything needed for the D-type including custom racing engines and a host of specialized and optional components. Also, the firm will work closely with home-builders whenever needed. Though parts sourcing is readily available in the United States, except for the right-hand rack-and-pinion steering unit, Predator keeps some components on hand, steering included, along with other specialized Jaguar pieces.

Whatever Jaguar's transcendent, mysterious appeal is, it certainly has been a lasting one for me. Never did I imagine that someday I might take one of these magnificent cars for a spin. After all, that privilege was reserved for the likes of legendary drivers such as Mike Hawthorn and Sterling Moss. But what a charge to experience even a replica of these historic vehicles. The car may not be entirely authentic, but the feelings are. KC

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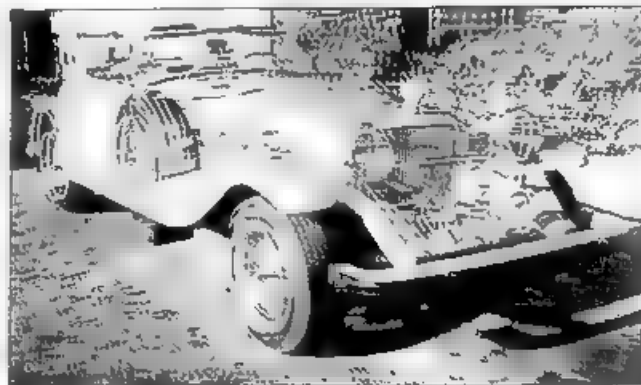
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THE "DUC"

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The car is a 1964 Ford Mustang coupe, but it's not the one you remember. It's a custom-built car that's been modified to look like a 1964 Ford Mustang coupe. The car is painted a bright yellow and has a black roof rack. It's a very nice car and it's a great example of what can be done with a classic car.



DREAM MACHINE

A few years ago Mike and I decided to build a custom car. We wanted a car that was different from anything we had ever seen. We wanted a car that was fast, powerful, and had a lot of character. We wanted a car that was a dream machine.

Our advice to anyone planning to build a custom car is to make sure you have plenty of patience, money, and friends who are into custom cars. It was hard work, but well worth it.

Rock Wells & Mike Repine
Myrtleville, MO

It's a 1964 Ford Mustang coupe, but it's not the one you remember. It's a custom-built car that's been modified to look like a 1964 Ford Mustang coupe. The car is painted a bright yellow and has a black roof rack. It's a very nice car and it's a great example of what can be done with a classic car.



We used aluminum intake manifold, Hays clutch, and more. Although McBurnie is no longer in business, he was very professional, and enjoyed working with someone of his integrity.

Elliott M. Garber
Chicago, IL

A BUSMAN'S WORLD



impet, and the car has a black captop. I also designed and built all the brackets, the dash, and custom stainless steel bumper and pipes.

Daniel St. Jean
Vancouver, BC

It's a 1964 Ford Mustang coupe, but it's not the one you remember. It's a custom-built car that's been modified to look like a 1964 Ford Mustang coupe. The car is painted a bright yellow and has a black roof rack. It's a very nice car and it's a great example of what can be done with a classic car.



exhaust manifold is a cast iron '64 Corvette. Hooked to this is a custom-built 2 1/2-inch exhaust that runs to the rear.

We take it to shows during the summer and enjoy warm, sunny driving days, and it currently has 3000 miles. Our wish is that someday everyone can enjoy driving a car this wonderful.

Michael Ernst
South St. Paul, MN

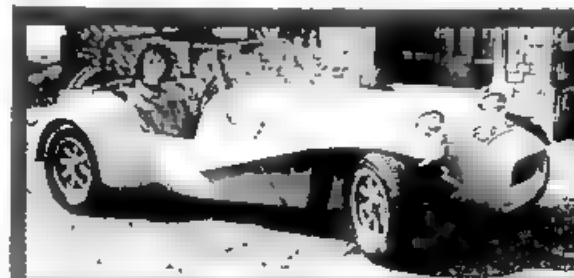
THE FLYING ROADSTER

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The car is a 1964 Ford Mustang coupe, but it's not the one you remember. It's a custom-built car that's been modified to look like a 1964 Ford Mustang coupe. The car is painted a bright yellow and has a black roof rack. It's a very nice car and it's a great example of what can be done with a classic car.

Bruce J. Loos
Roanoke, IN



BRIT KIT

My kit car, a Westfield SE, is a copy of the Lotus Seven that is very popular here in England. I received it in December of '89 and intended to have it on the road by the next summer. It took longer than expected, and it was a year before it was completed. All the running gear came from various Ford models. The engine is a rebuilt 1600

adjustable Spax coil-over shocks all around. The brakes are drum rear and disc front, and since the car weighs in at 1150 pounds, it has no trouble stopping. It holds the road well with its Yokohama tires and quick steering rack. I did all the work myself and learned a whole lot in the process!

Neil Dyer
Cambs, England

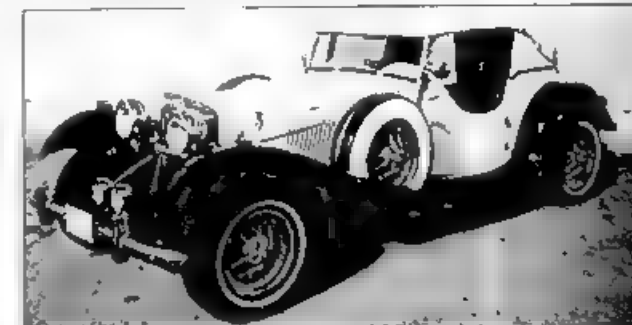
MY TOY

After I retired in 1986, I thought I'd never work again if I didn't have to. But I started reading Kit Car while convalescing from surgery, and soon became restless.

At the National Kit Car Show in Columbus, Ohio, in July of that year, I fell in love with a replica of a '39 Jaguar by Classic Roadsters. I saw it on Saturday and ordered one on Sunday. The car was finally delivered in August of that year.

Meanwhile, I bought a '75 Pinto wagon with a V6 engine for the donor car. I cleaned, repaired, and rebuilt it to make it ready for the kit.

I entered my first show with the completed car in May of 1987, and since then have participated in some 260 car activities of every



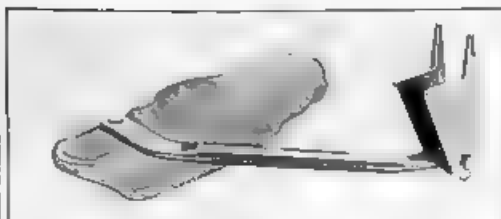
sort. I've racked up 27,000 miles and won over 56 trophies and awards. I received my last award on my 71st birthday.

I'm looking forward to the next show and I hope to see all you kit builders there. Look for my license plates—"MY TOY"

Jack W. Householder
Pickerington, OH

OFF THE SHELF

Compiled by Susan Enslein



STRUT

Heid's Hot Rod Shop is now offering Tubular Strut Rods for the popular Mustang II IFS installations on Cobras and other kit cars. The strut rods are TIG welded for maximum strength and appearance. The rubber pivot-type bushing in line with the front bushing provides a smooth pivot action just like that of the upper arms, a major improvement over the rigid movement of the stock bushings. Since the frame plates are universal, they can be notched to fit your frame perfectly. The kit comes complete with hardware and instructions. Call for a free catalog at 800/841-8188 or 708/394-1746.



KEEPING TIME

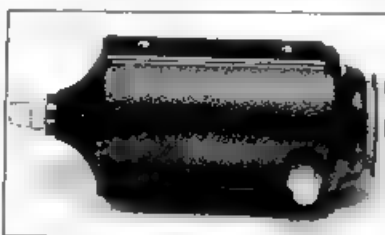
Not just any old strap-ons, these new timepieces feature pen-and-ink illustrations of the all-time most popular classic, exotic, and sports vehicles. They are lightweight, stylish, and durable, with water resistance to three atmospheres. They are available with a choice of steel-mesh or leather bands, all complemented with a matte black finish. Some of the renditions available are the Shelby 427 Cobra, street or race (racing version pictured); Pantera GT5; Porsche 550 Spyder; Lamborghini Countach; and more than 50 others. To order, send \$149.95 postpaid to: Classic Time, Dept. KC07, 12201A S. 17th Ave., Burnsville, MN 55337, or call 612/890-5942.

98 KIT CAR



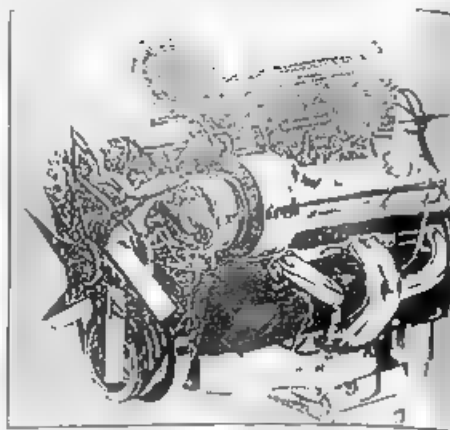
RESCUE RUSTY PARTS

Have you ever tried to rescue rusty donor parts for installation in your bound-to-be-perfect kit car? Plast-kote has come out with Neutra Rust, a new way to clean stubborn rust-coated parts. The firm claims it stops oxidation permanently, leaving a solid, paintable surface after a single one-step application. Neutra Rust is also said to be ecologically safe, so you can protect your car from the ravages of oxygen, without ravaging the environment. Information: Plast-kote, Dept. KC07, P.O. Box 708, Medina, OH 44258, 800/431-5928.



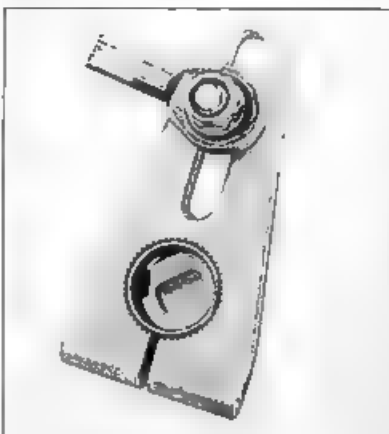
TANK TOP

This new JAZ remote Power Steering Tank comes with an easily removable vented cap. The tank will mount to a roll-bar, firewall, or other desired location with two K-20 screws. This versatile tank can also be used as a rear-end breather or filler, or even a radiator catch can. The side fitting can be connected to one rear-end vent for quicker filling or can be connected to a line attached to the power steering system for return. Contact Genuine JAZ Products, Dept. KC07, P.O. Box 3504, Thousand Oaks, CA 91359, 805/525-8800.



CHROME DOME

Trans Dapt has developed a complete line of chrome-plated accessories to add shine to your specialty car. The parts are designed for easy installation and removal, and may be purchased either in kits or separately for most popular engines. Now available from the new 112-page catalog are air cleaners, valve covers, breathers and caps, fasteners, oil pans, trans covers, and all kinds of brackets. TD Chrome is available in local auto stores or by contacting Trans Dapt, Dept. KC07, 16410 Manning Way, Cerritos, CA 90701, 213/404-2985.



THINK LINK

If you have a misaligned gear indicator, the Kugel Transmission Linkage Kit is just the ticket. This simple bolt-on kit adapts any column or floor shifter to your Turbo 350/400/700 trans, and eliminates all linkage problems. For more information on Kugel's complete line of chassis, IFS, and car components, contact Kugel Komponenten, Dept. KC07, 451 Park Industrial Dr., La Habra, CA 90631, 714/778-4925.

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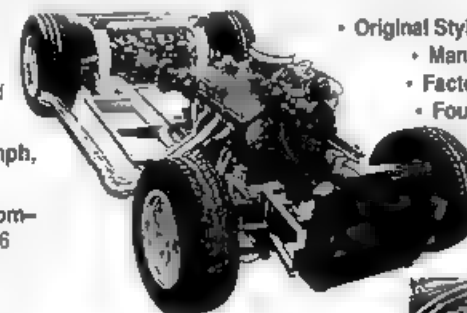
"Braking was exceptionally good at 161 feet from 70 mph, and 1.04g was measured on the skidpad."

"This car holds our record for fastest through the slalom—averaging 71.2 mph (the Nissan 300ZX Turbo did it at 69.6 mph, the old record). Steering response, though, was quicker than lightning."

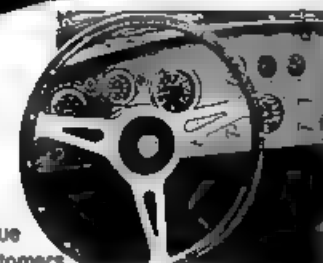
"Everything about the car is skewed in the direction of steering quickness... its light weight, its rear weight bias, its power steering, its short wheelbase, and its low-profile tires on wide wheels. The combination makes a standard Corvette feel as lethargic as a Limousine."

"... the Corvette suspension was more composed than any of the others."

Car and Driver Magazine, December, 1991.



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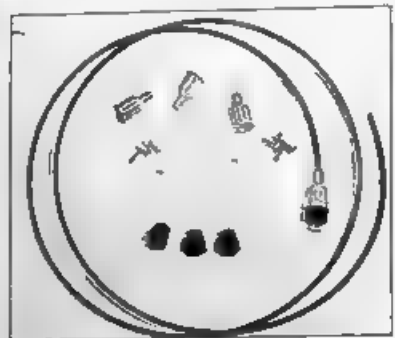
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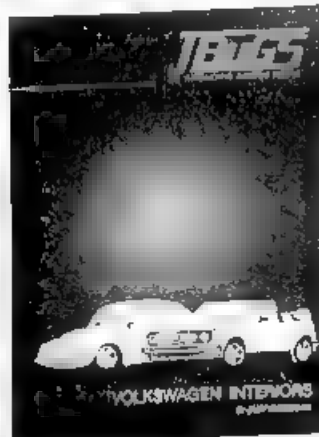
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Burned-out brake and turn-signal bulbs can be dangerous when you're not aware that they have fried. Protect yourself and your car with the Fiber Optic Bulb Advisory System from StreetWorks. Once installed, this kit will let you know which lights are working and when. The lens units transmit the bulbs' light through a fiber optic strand back to the dash, allowing you to see the lights at work (or not!). The installation is in a clean 1/2-inch pin-point spot with the mounting behind the board. Both two- and four-bulb systems are available. Contact: StreetWorks, Dept. KC07, P.O. Box 270, Bozrah, CT 06334, 203/859-0513.



JBUGS, a major supplier of VW products, now offers a new 1992 VW Interiors catalog. This 40-page, fully illustrated catalog is free and includes five new products the company has added to its line: convertible tops, headliners, boots, accessories, and OEM (Classic) two-tone panels. Also included is the full line of Volkswagen water-cooled interiors. It is easy to find the model and the interior design you desire—just send away to: JBUGS, Dept. KC07, 14204 S. Prairie Ave. NR2, Hawthorne, CA 90250, or call 800/HI-JBUGS or 310/978-0929 (within California).



Burke Racing has come up with a new and unique paint remover that is totally safe for stripping all composites and plastics. It uses a spray system, and the company claims it effectively removes one layer at a time without attacking Bondo or other filler materials. Once it is applied, a simple fingernail test is all that is needed to check for depth. Paint Buster is water washable, and when the surface is wiped clean it is ready for paint adhesion. For more information on the product, call or write Burke Racing, Dept. KC07, 7718 Topridge Dr., West Chester, OH 45069, 800/572-RACE. **KC**

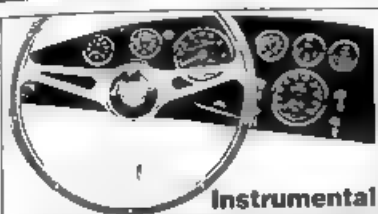
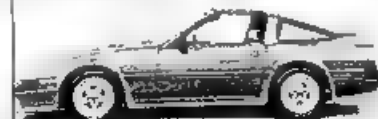
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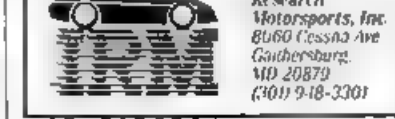
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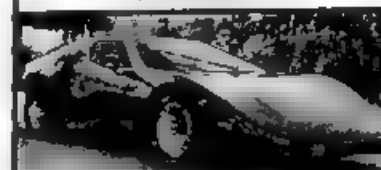
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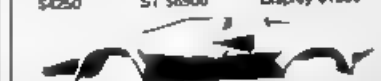
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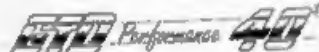
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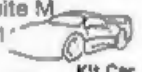
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